

COMMUNITY ACTION

NO. 44

30p

COIN STREET:
Community
scores victory
over developer

**ALL CUTS ARE
BLOODY**

**CARDIFF
BROADCASTING**

**SHIPYARD
CLOSURES:**
wider effects

**LEASEHOLD
CAMPAIGN**

**ACCESS FOR
THE DISABLED**

POSTER:
Council
housebuilding
and sales



WILL YOU HELP?

Our last appeal for help in producing and distributing the magazine produced some valuable results. However, as we said at that time (see CA issue 40), Community Action is still produced by a handful of people in their spare time, and our day-time jobs are all very demanding. So we have decided to repeat our request for socialists committed to supporting working class struggles to help put the magazine together, in any of the following ways:

- ★ working with a group of people from the collective and outside on writing articles.
- ★ research for a particular article, Action Report etc. We research a lot of our material from scratch.
- ★ help with layout, lettraset, building up a supply of cartoons, photos (you don't need previous experience)
- ★ help with typing, distribution, publicity mail outs etc.
- ★ undertake to send us news from groups and campaigns in a particular town/region on a regular basis.

We have weekly meetings to discuss material, and spend about two weeks (evenings and weekends) doing the final editing, paste up and typing etc for each issue. So, please phone us or write if you can help in these or any other ways.

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NEWS

REPORTS FROM TENANTS & ACTION GROUPS COMMUNITY CAMPAIGNS AND OTHER LABOUR MOVEMENT ORGANISATIONS

LONDON

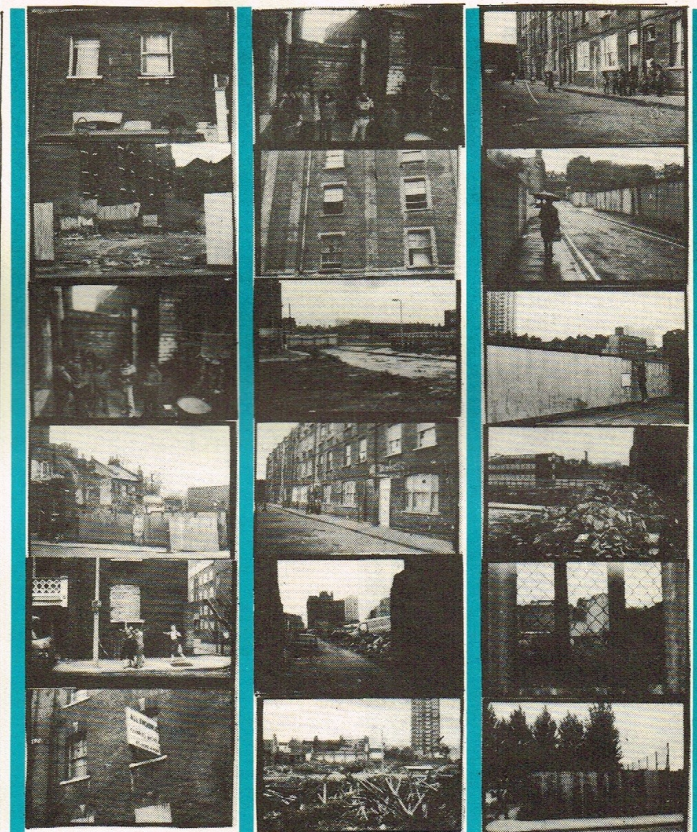
PROJECT EXPOSES HOUSING IN TOWER HAMLETS

The Greater London Council picked out Spitalfields as one of the two most deprived wards in London in 1974, and set up with Tower Hamlets Council and the Home Office, the Spitalfields Project to tackle this deprivation. In 5 years of the project the GLC and Tower Hamlets will have built between them 8 new homes and modernised 30.

The Spitalfields Housing and Planning Rights Service have compiled a dossier which shows that -

- 260 households awaiting rehousing under slum clearance.
- Despite Spitalfields being designated a priority area the local borough council has not constructed any housing since 1961.
- Between 3,000 and 4,000 people could be housed if homes were erected on 47 acres of waste land.
- Many families still live in appalling 19th century conditions.

This is in a borough where there are 2000 empty homes, 6850 people on the waiting list. In 1975 the GLC and Tower Hamlets promised 615



new houses for 1979 - now there will not be more than 45 if that. A special issue of 'The Local', Spitalfields community newspaper has been produced to expose the scandal of waste land, appalling living conditions and the long delays in housing schemes. 'The Local' from The Montefiore Centre, Deal St, Hanbury St, London E1.

and now...

TORIES SLASH COUNCIL HOUSEBUILDING

Since it came to power, the Tory GLC has been trying to get rid of its council housing responsibilities and promote home ownership at any cost. This policy has involved selling council

houses, 'homesteading', abandoning full modernisation of older council housing, punitive rent rises, and transferring the GLC estates to the boroughs.

This last policy, and that of stopping building in outer London, were 'justified' in the Manifesto on the grounds that this would allow the council to concentrate on providing council housing in inner London, where they admitted the housing problem was bad.

What it means

However, the housing policy committee has now decided that the council should stop building council housing for rent anywhere in inner London except for a handful of houses in Covent Garden and some in the Docklands. The rest of the drastically reduced programme will be built at Thamesmead. It is their intention to leave it to the private market to provide new housing in London.



So, compared with the building target of 2000 council houses a year which were the figures the GLC gave after their election but long since abandoned, only 500 houses are to be built this year, 1,000 next year and the programme will be run down to 700 by 1984.

★ 52 schemes involving 1400 dwellings in inner boroughs are

to be stopped at once and the land sold to private developers.

★ 136 more sites planned for council housing are to be 'considered' in August, but will almost certainly go the same way.

★ 650 jobs in the architects, valuers and housing departments are under immediate threat, along with the 850 jobs in the construction branch which are already likely to be lost.

★ The 10 year council house modernisation programme is to be speeded up for completion in 5 years - but while this will benefit some tenants, it looks as though the GLC is planning to stop all housing activity after 1984.

The main reason the GLC is carrying on building in docklands and Thamesmead is because it would be too difficult or unprofitable for the private market to build there.

COVENTRY

TEMPORARY TENANTS WIN COURT CASE

On 20th June Coventry City Council were found guilty at Coventry Magistrates Court of housing a family in a temporary council house, the conditions were proven to be prejudicial to their health and constituted a statutory nuisance under the Public Health Act 1936.

The councils own survey of temporary houses, carried out in March 1979, found that 101 were in 'substantial disrepair' and 6 unfit for human habitation. The Temporary Tenants Association believes that the case conclusively that the frequent denials made by the previous Tory council were blatant distortions of reality. The Association and Coventry Trades Council have called on the Labour council to state categorically that bad housing must never again be used as a form of punishment for homeless people, irrespective of whether they are in debt to the city council or

not. In any case, as the survey carried out by the Trades Council showed, the vast majority of temporary tenants are not in temporary housing because of willful refusal to pay rents or mortgages, but as a result of unemployment, redundancy, family breakup or illness - all causes beyond their individual control.

Coventry Temporary Tenants Association, c/o Coventry Workshop, 40 Binley Road, Coventry.

LONDON

BATTERSEA MURAL DEMOLISHED BY NIGHT

In the early hours of 6th June contractors sent in by the Morgan Crucible Co. Ltd., started to demolish the wall which surrounds their Battersea site and on which local residents and friends had painted a 200 foot long mural entitled 'Battersea: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly'. (See Community Action no. 37).

Secret moves

Everyone was caught unawares by the night raid by the demolishers and a large part of the wall was gone by morning. The first Brian Barnes, the community artist who designed the mural, knew of it was when, as a shareholder of Morgan's he received a letter on Wednesday morning saying that the wall would come down that day. A campaign to have the mural preserved was still being fought and a petition was to have been presented to the Greater London Council, who own the communal stretch of green in front of the mural, later in June. Campaigners hoped the mural area could be amalgamated with that, creating a riverside 'park'

Supporters kept behind barriers

Even so, once word got round a crowd of 200 angry supporters came to the scene, along with a group of police. The people who came were local residents,

people who passed the mural everyday on their way to work and bus workers from the garage opposite. They were kept behind barriers by police although one bus driver broke through the cordon and Brian Barnes climbed on top of the only remaining piece of the wall. He stayed there for 13 hours despite being harrassed by demolishers and police.

A Tory Councillor turned up but met such hostility that he had to beat a hasty retreat to the police station. In all six people were arrested.

Senseless destruction

The senseless destruction of this piece of community art can only be viewed in the context of the long struggle of the Battersea residents to try to get the plan for the Morgan site changed from office development and luxury flats to low rise council housing and open space alongside this stretch of the river. The depiction of Morgan's directors and local Tory councillors in the mural as 'The Ugly' must have been an embarrassment that they were only too pleased to be rid of. If the destruction had not taken place at night it would not have succeeded at all - so great would have been the local community's opposition.



The one part of the wall that was left (after an injunction stopped the demolition) was defended for 4 weeks by a 24-hour vigil of local people and supporters - then it, too, went.

Since then the defenders of the wall have been trying fur-



Workman beginning to demolish final section of the mural

Photos by Gery Roberts

ther action. Brian Barnes was nominated onto the Board of Directors of Morgan Crucible at its AGM - they rapidly declared there was no room on the Board which may well not have been true. That will be pursued and could mean a new AGM.

More importantly, the destruction of the wall and mural has now exposed an ugly derelict, factory, dangerous for kids to play in and containing asbestos which was disturbed in demolition and floated over neighbouring housing and work places. Campaigners brought in the Health and Safety Executive who forced the firm to take suitable precautions. Demolition of the factory is now taking place in the centre of the site - so there was no

legitimate reason for the wall and mural to be demolished first.

Support needed

The group are still determined to expose the vandalism of big business - who receive police protection, trespass on GLC land and cause damage with machines, endanger the local community and deprive it of its unique creation.

Action you can take:-

- Boycott Rowney Artwork Products, produced by the Morgan Crucible Group
- Letters of support and contributions to the Battersea Mural Defence Fund c/o David Imberg, 1 Stormont Road, London SW11 tel. 01 828 7055.

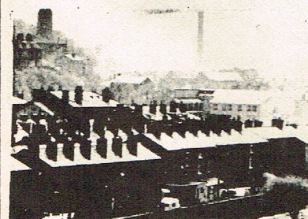
Fare fight again in Leeds

Bus fares are being increased another 15% in August in West Yorkshire - a total increase of 275% since 1973. Previous campaigns against fare increases (see Community Action No 33 p14-18) have concentrated on fighting through the Traffic Commissioners public inquiries which have delayed but not stopped increases. This time the West Yorkshire Public Transport Group are calling for the non-payment of the increases. The 9/12 TGWU branch of busworkers are fully supporting the campaign. Leaflets have been distributed to trade union branches, community groups etc. W.Y.P.T.G. 12 Midland Road, Leeds 6.



No action areas

No Housing Action Areas have yet been declared in Calderdale, Lancs despite the need for major improvement in towns like Todmorden, Hebden Bridge and the use of HAA's by nearby councils which are also not typical 'inner city' areas - Why? - ignorance of council officials explains Calder Valley Press No. 4 (14 New Road, Hebden Bridge).



Womens advice

A Working Womens Advice Centre has been run each Saturday for the past 6 weeks by Bradford Trades Council Womens Sub-committee. Advice has been given on wages, health and safety, trade union rights etc.

Urban Renewal Charter

An 'Urban Renewal Charter' has recently been drawn up by Community Forum, a federation of community groups in Birmingham's inner city. It includes demands for scrapping HAA's and GIA's and having House Improvement Areas with 90% grants to all owner occupiers and 100% grants to pensioners and those on low income; strengthening of compulsory purchase for improvement, a new fabric repair grant etc. Copies from Community Forum c/o 161 Corporation Street, Birmingham.

Trades Council bulletin

Bristol Trades Council is to start a regular bulletin to keep the local labour movement more informed of its campaigns and policies.

£140m public money lost in property deals

1974	£128.7m loss
1975	£ 62.6m loss
1976	£ 27.0m loss
1977	£ 12.0m loss
1978	£ 1.3m profit

These are the massive losses incurred by the Crown Agents involvement in property and fringe banking following the collapse of the property boom in 1973/4. They were bailed out by government grants - but about £140m of public money will be lost according to the 1978 annual report.

Bargain!

"How about this as an indication of what inflation has done to property prices? Agents John D. Wood have a functional little property on a 64 year lease on the market. The asking price is £10,000, not bad for a South Kensington location. But what is it you get for that amount? - a garage! " 'Monocle' - the 'community' magazine for Mayfair, Knightsbridge and Belgravia.

1 in 10 empty

A survey of 2,100 homes in Camden Town (organised by St Pancras Local Labour Party) discovered over 1 in 10 homes were empty. Two thirds of the empty council homes appeared to be immediately habitable.



Power of CHC's

In the year up to October 1978 Community Health Councils took their opposition to a hospital closure to the Secretary of State on 37 occasions but only succeeded in helping to prevent 3 closures. This is the basis of an article in CHC News the monthly newspaper for CHC's which has news, information etc about NHS policies and CHC activities around the country (CHC News, 362 Euston Road, London NW1) It was written by Jeannette Mitchell, Secretary of Brent CHC whose annual report for 1978/9 states that from their experience "CHC's as institutions are formally powerless". Its an excellent report showing how their priorities are to investigate Brents health needs, promoting discussion on health issues and providing a resource for campaigns by the wider community. Copies from Brent CHC, Rear Block, 16 High St, London NW10.

More Trades Council housing committees

The number of Trades Councils with housing and/or planning sub-committees are increasing. Edinburgh, Burnley, South Shields, North Tyneside, Gateshead have recently been added to those in Coventry, Leeds and York. If you know of others please let us know.

Law Centres axed

Tory controlled Wandsworth Council is proposing to axe 3 community law centres at Balham, Battersea and Garratt Lane making 30 staff redundant. They plan to replace them with a new organisation, under direct council control, and will be restricted almost exclusively to legally aided individual cases. Law Centre Campaign, 177 Battersea High St, London SW11.

Investigating damp flats

Cauntton Avenue Flats Tenants Association (CAFTA) has succeeded in getting Nottingham Council to call in the Building Research Station (a government financed body which does research for the building industry) to investigate their damp flats. The council now admits that the 8-year old flats were badly designed and built but there is disagreement over the root causes and remedies to the dampness. CAFTA had a building engineer prepare a report which stated "There is no doubt that the majority of units suffer damp conditions, due to a variety of causes - condensation, rising damp, water penetration into the walls, defective roofs and balcony waterproofing ...". Roofs are to be repaired and the expensive electric warm air heating system may be replaced.

Playbuses demo

Wandsworth Town Hall recently saw a rather different demonstration from the now familiar picket of Council meetings with union, trades council, etc placards and banners. A large number of mothers and kids were protesting against the councils plan to withdraw 2 of the six playbuses and cut the staff by a third - another of its mean penny pinching cuts. Four playbuses continuously circled the town hall for 2 hours while the other buses set up play areas on the pavement while a delegation went to the Director of Social Service's office. Many of those involved had never been on a demonstration before but who now feel more and more strongly that something is wrong.

BECK HOUSE



Market solution!

"It is the market that will solve the chronic problems of the inner city"

Michael Heseltine, Secretary of State for the Environment, speaking at Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors/Times Conservation Awards Ceremony, London, 10 July 1979.

Action on under fives

A conference on the TUC Charter for the under fives organised by Oxford and District Trades Council called for community and trade union support for occupations and strike action to defend nursery places and classes against cuts. Also discussed starting a campaign to unionise childminders and nursery nurse students, and to establish concrete links with organisations in Clwyd, North Wales where 52 nurseries are to be closed in September. Full resolution from E. Eames, 7 East St, Osney, Oxford.

Town Hall saga



Southwark Council issued the CPO for 1-99 Peckham High St and gave themselves planning permission for the new £50m town hall - but this didn't stop them trying to bid for 2 acres of GLC land at the Elephant and Castle. But they were beaten to it by another property developer! Now cuts of £2½m imposed by the Government may mean the town hall scheme is halted again - a decision will be made in September.

Southwark Campaign have just issued another bulletin which reports on polls taken in two wards (one is the site of the town hall and the other is the leader of the council's ward) in which 73% and 93% were against the project. £2½m has already been spent on fees alone. Southwark Campaign, 27 Huddersfield House, Sumner Estate, London SE15.

Estates Action Group formed

Tenants representing 16 estates in Islington Council's inter-war estates improvement programme have formed an Estates Action Group. The Group plans to organise action on repairs, transfers, compensation, the type and quality of improvement work and the councils £10m cut in the housing programme. Contact 37 Bonnington House, Killick St, London N1.

Picket of Home Ownership Office



Tenants from the London Tenants Organisation supported by trade unionists from NALGO, NUPE and TGWU picketed the Greater London Council's Home Ownership Office in King St on Friday 20 July. With 209,550 families on council waiting lists in London tenants are demanding -

- an end to council house sales
- the closure of the Home Ownership Office
- the sacking of John Cory-Mitchell the newly appointed "Director of Home Ownership" on the grounds that his job should not have been established in the first place.

John Cory-Mitchell is certainly suited to the job. He is a major shareholder in Trafalgar House, the massive company that owns property companies, the Daily Express and Daily Star, etc. In the last 10 years he has been chairman, managing director of director of several Trafalgar House private housebuilding subsidiaries. His salary is more than £14,000 a year plus commission for houses sold.

LONDON TENANT

A new tenants bi-monthly newspaper has recently been started. Next issue out in August will contain a 4 page pull out supplement on council house sales including a poster and reports on the effects of sales in London and elsewhere. The supplement will also be available separately at £10 per 1,000 copies.

London Tenant, 17 Victoria Park Square, London E2 (01-981 1221)

LIVERPOOL

JOINT UNION/ COMMUNITY ACTION ON HOUSING

Over the past eighteen months representatives from four community councils in the north inner city of Liverpool and local stewards from five unions have met together at monthly meetings under the umbrella of the "North City Joint Housing Action Group". Discussions and action have centred around the repair backlog, (now running at 60,000 in an area with 9,000 unemployed building workers), the "build for sale" programme and the selling off of council houses. In recent months, the group has concentrated on producing a pamphlet on the housing crisis in Liverpool, (details below).

Public meeting

A public meeting was held early in June to coincide with the publication of the leaflet. Over 70 people attended the meeting which was chaired by the chairman of the local branch of NALGO. The chairman of a local community council spoke about how the North City Group had developed and the problems which the



tenants faced, particularly over repairs and high rents. The Senior Steward of Liverpool Corporation Works Department, described the problems faced by the workers, the understaffing and the need for a "planned maintenance system". Two speakers from the "Direct Labour Collective" spoke about the situation and the struggles in other parts of the country. This was followed by some useful comment, discussion and resolutions.

One of the resolutions passed was to support the lobby against the freezing of all vacant posts in Liverpool which has been in operation since March. Called by

NALGO and supported by a number of other unions and community groups, this lobby was well supported with a crowd of over 600 people crammed outside the Town Hall.

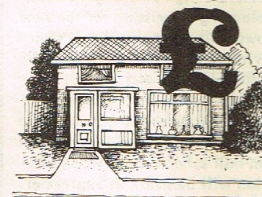
City-wide spread

The North City Group will continue to meet but it is now hoped that similar groups might be set up in other parts of the city, linked together by a loose steering committee which would be on a city-wide basis. For a copy of the pamphlet on Liverpool's housing crisis send a large stamped addressed envelope to Peter Sharkey, 9 Westbourne Way, Liverpool L6 1LH.

NEWCASTLE

THE NEED TO INCREASE HOME LOSS AND 'WELL- MAINTAINED PAYMENTS

Since 1st April 1973, owners and tenants who have lived in their homes for at least five years have been entitled to a Home Loss Payment if they have to move because of a Compulsory Purchase Order, or for improvements to be made (see CA No 39 Sept/Oct 1978). Under the Land Compensation Act 1973 the amount was fixed at 3 times the Rateable Value, with a minimum payment of £150 and



a maximum of £1500. Certain tenants and owners are also eligible for a Well-Maintained Payment which is also based on a maximum of $3\frac{1}{2}$ times the Rateable Value.

Tories scrap review

The Rateable Values of properties were last revised (upwards) to take effect from

1st April 1973. The last Labour Government planned a review of Rateable Values in 1982; the new Tory Government has now scrapped this - in the long-term, they plan to do away with the rating system entirely.

Shrinking value

There is still a lot of older property in the pipeline for clearance under CPO procedures, and many Councils' clearance programmes extend into the 1980's. In addition, improvement programmes (both council and/or housing association ones) will mean many people permanently moving out of

their homes. Under existing legislation, the value of the Home Loss and Well-Maintained Payments will still be based on the 1973 Rateable Values.

Since 1973, the value of the 'pound in your pocket' has fallen drastically. Inflation, as measured by the Retail Price Index, has more than doubled prices. What cost you £1.00p in January 1974 cost you something like £2.15p in May 1979; and the government's latest projections put inflation at around the 17% level for the autumn of this year.

Other payments increased

The Home Loss and Well-Maintained Payments are usually accompanied by other types of compensation - eg market-value for owner-occupiers of fit houses, plus disturbance payments for removals, installing cookers, etc. (Again see CA No 39 for "who gets what"). These, however, are obviously based on current costs at the time the property is compulsorily purchased or when the occupier moves.

Time for action

It is not difficult to see, then, how these two types of compensation are worth much less now than they were in 1973. It is surely time for activists to press for restoration to their 1973 levels.

The Walker Road Action Group (Newcastle) has begun to do this in a small way by writing to their MP (Mike Thomas /Labour/ Newcastle East) explaining the situation to him and asking him to look into it further. They would welcome any comments or information from other groups/individuals with any similar thoughts/ideas on action.

Write to: Mrs E. Penaluna, 1341 Walker Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, 6. Tyne & Wear.

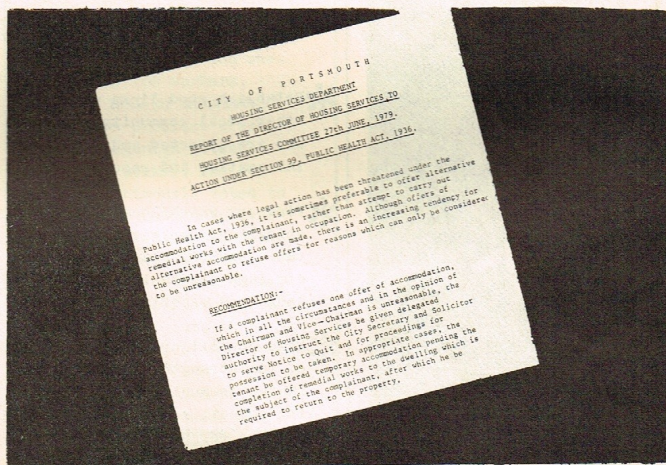
PORTSMOUTH COUNCIL TO EMPLOY PRIVATE SOLICITORS AGAINST TENANTS

Portsmouth City Council has recently decided to employ private solicitors to fight cases brought against them by tenants under Section 99 of the Public Health Act.

The tenants are taking legal action to force the council to do something about the dampness in their homes and so far have lost only 1 case in

50. This has led to a strong reaction from the council who say they are "concerned about the sledgehammer procedure being used to flatten us" Private solicitors are being employed by the council to fight these cases "every inch of the way" and no financial limit has been set on how much can be spent by the council on doing this.

The tenants are not deterred by the council's attitude and are shortly bringing 30 more cases to the courts, starting anti-dampness campaigns in other areas, and have a target of 500 cases against the council in the next year.



LONDON

ALLOTMENT HOLDERS HEAR INQUIRY RESULT

In C.A. No. 41 (page 10) we reported on the case presented by allotment holders and residents in opposition to Waltham Forest Council's plans to build an industrial estate on the Low Hall Farm allotments site.

The Inspector at the Local Plan Public Inquiry has now reported and her recommendations represent a real victory for the objectors.

★ That the council's proposals to reduce the number of allot-

ments by releasing their sites for development should be reconsidered. The Inspector accepted that because our allotments are on one of the biggest sites and in the Southern half of the borough, which is a very built up area, existing plot holders would face a long wait to get a new plot if the plan was implemented. She recommended replacement of the allotments on another site if in the future development was ever allowed.

'Unacceptable burden on local residents'

* Local residents were pleased to see that the Inspector acknowledged that the conditions for residents in the area would deteriorate if industrial development went ahead. In recommending no extension to the industrial estate the Inspector was particularly concerned with the problem of providing an access road. One proposed route "would place an unacceptable burden on local residents" and two others would add to already severe congestion.



The final decision whether to accept the Inspector's recommendations lies with the council, and in the last few days the relevant committee has discussed the Inquiry Report. The committee has accepted the recommendation to delete references in the Plan to an extension of the industrial estate over the allotments. But it is clear that the council is continuing to look for an access route, and if they find one the plans for the industrial site will be reintroduced.

The councillors were forced to recognise that the proposal to build in the allotments site was seen by the Dept. of Environment

as the most controversial part of the Local Plan, and that to go against the Inspector's recommendation might lead to the Secretary of State stepping in. The committee did not accept that temporary allotments should be replaced, but the Allotments Association will object if the council fails to do this.

Valuable lessons

Of the lessons learnt by us and which might help other groups in a similar situation, the following points should be noted:

- * You must be fully aware of all the procedures involved in a Local Plan. It is very easy to miss out on opportunities to object.
- * Establish good links with other local community groups who are affected and pool information and resources.
- * Find out which local organisations can give assistance eg. SCAT, Planning Aid etc., and use their knowledge and experience.
- * Make councillors fully aware of the strength of feeling in the community by attending council committee meetings in force, and asking them to attend public meetings.
- * Exploit in full the resources available within the community eg., access to a printing press, professional help etc.
- * At the public inquiry don't be intimidated by barristers and other professionals, but keep all discussion at a common sense level rather than being drawn into technical discussions.

Thanks to Ashley Godfrey of Allotments Campaign Committee.

BATLEY TENANT VICTIMISED FOR DEMANDING HIS RIGHTS

Steve Williamson and family and all their neighbours had been fed up for years with the damp council houses in Fieldhead, Batley, and with Kirklees council telling them 'it's condensation'. So last summer he took the council to court. Batley Magistrates decided that there was a public health hazard in the house.

Council in the wrong and fined

Kirklees decided to rehouse Steve under a 'medical priority' to get off the hook - they don't repair unfit houses anymore, they just leave them empty for months or years. They offered two unsuitable houses, and finally rehoused the families satisfactorily after the three month period set by Batley Magistrates had run out. Steve went back to Batley Magistrates who fined Kirklees £100 for breach of order. However, Kirklees appealed and on June 25th, Judge Pickles got hold of the case at Huddersfield Crown Court - 'Are you one of those people who think council tenants can decide where they live?' he demanded.

But the tenant is treated like a criminal

No doubt Judge Pickles has never been in a council house in his life - he said that standing up for your rights to decent public health standards was a 'political' act against a 'democratic' authority. Judge Pickles was not elected democratically. He hammered Steve for £250 in costs and treated him like a criminal. Judge Pickles looked like he enjoyed this political vendetta against all tenants. Steve and Fieldhouse Tenants

Group got Kirklees to admit that there was widespread damp on the estate after years of censorship, evasion and lies.



Danger in the courts

Steve's case shows the danger of using courts which belong to our rulers. Even with a water-tight case, there is danger. You cannot ignore the courts, but you cannot rely on them - if Steve had been on his own all the houses would stay damp. The Judge has not stopped the use of the courts, but he has made it easier for local councils to ignore the magistrates.

Defence appeal

An immediate defence appeal has been set up - in three days £50 has been raised, but there is a long way to go. Appeals will be sent to tenants groups and trade unions, especially those involved in council work.

All donations should be sent to:
Fieldhead Tenants Group,
c/o 14 Withers Road,
Batley,
West Yorkshire.

LONDON

TENANTS & WORKERS JOIN FORCES TO STOP THE ROT

Council tenants and direct labour workers throughout London will be taking positive steps in the coming months to do something about

the scandalous problems of repairs and maintenance on council estates. At a conference on Saturday, 7th July, sponsored by the London Tenants Organisation (Association of London Housing Estates) delegates from tenants groups and trade unions from across London resolved to work together towards real improvements in repairs.

Collective action

The conference identified problems with present repairs systems as organisational inefficiency, limited resources of money and manpower, and the wages structure for direct labour organisations. The consequences are a poor service for tenants and lack of job satisfaction and reasonable pay for workers. Tenants' lack of knowledge about these problems often causes antagonism between tenant and worker. The conference unanimously voted to take unified action to overcome these problems, especially in the face of efforts by the new government to restrict the viability of direct works and other cuts in housing finance.

Joint committees are to be set up locally between wor-

kers and tenants following the example of the Sandwell (W. Midlands) group which over the past 18 months has secured real gains for both tenants and building workers.

The conference called on convenors and stewards from London Direct Labour Organisations and tenants groups to ensure that the impending Tory attacks and the attacks coming from many London local authorities are met by collective action. Tenants organisations, together with the trade unions, should mount a positive campaign defending and fighting to expand direct labour and to promote all aspects of public housing.

Code of practice

A working party was established to look into the possibility of a code of practice for all local authorities to follow laying down the speed with which repairs should be carried out.

The conference also gave support to the demand for an adequate living wage and a 35 hour week for direct labour workers. It called for extra money from Central Government to correct design faults in modern council



housing and for the strongest possible action to be taken against the private contractors and consultants responsible to publicise their defective work and to prevent them from doing further public sector work.

London Tenants Organisation (ALHE), 17 Victoria Park Square, London E2 9PE (01 981 1221)

LONDON HOUSING CONFERENCE CALLS FOR ACTION AGAINST CUTS

The joint Shelter/Housing Action conference on June 30th was att-

ended by about 300 people, half of them from outside London. In drawing together tenants, trade unionists, local councillors, housing activists and others marked an important step forward for the fight against Tory housing policies and for improved housing conditions for all.

Militant mood

The mood of the conference was of determined militancy, tempered by the knowledge that at the last election the Conservatives gained more support from Council and private tenants than at any time for many years. Conference recognised the need not merely to fight the Tory proposals but also to fight for radical alternative housing policies, and it came up with a number of constructive dec-

isions to assist in this struggle.

Action committee

After discussion in workshops on a number of aspects of housing policy and struggle, a wide ranging resolution was passed by an overwhelming majority, calling for opposition to the government proposals and stressing the need to campaign for an alternative housing strategy. To help do this the resolution called for the setting up of a steering committee of eleven people to prepare the strategy for action, inviting other labour movement organisations to take part and to make plans for a delegate conference in the autumn.

For further information, contact Housing Action, 52, Acre Lane, London SW2.



Members of Housing Action picket the Royal Court of Justice as the Greater London Council gets a possession order to evict people who had occupied houses on their new Ferry Lane Estate. The occupation was in protest at the Council houses being left empty pending sale on the open market. The houses were built to let to homeless and badly housed people who will be condemned to more years on the waiting list when they are sold. The GLC have lost £250,000 by keeping them empty (lost rent, rates, security costs, repairing damage done while they are empty), and will lose £15,000 more on every sale (even though they are selling for £19,750+). The occupation gained a lot of publicity and immense support from local people and other tenants. 7 people were arrested at the peaceful picket and charged with obstruction (!) and 8 more arrested at the picket outside the court hearing for the first 7. Housing Action and London Squatters Union are organising a mass picket on Oct 9th at Bow St. to re-affirm the right to picket.

The Insecurity Of Being A Leaseholder

"Leasehold is not simply a convenient legal form: an idea conjured out of thin air which equitably apportions rights and property between one citizen and the next. It is not snuffed out easily as a candle flame might be when it causes more harm than it creates light. Instead it is a product of class relations. Only a change in those relations will really solve the leasehold problem."
Leasehold Loopholes

Whole areas of some cities (Birmingham, Cardiff, London) consist of leasehold houses - built not for sale but to let on 99 year leases. Big land-owners let parcels of land on a building lease (the headlease) to builders for 99 years in return for ground rent. A landlord then usually bought blocks of houses from the builders, and later sold the leases off to individuals. When the lease is up the occupier becomes a tenant and the property and land reverts to the freeholder. The system is causing considerable problems in these areas because as time runs out on the lease the market value of the property decreases so neither the landlord leaseholders nor the occupying leaseholder bother to spend money on repairs (the former because it's not worth his/her while and the latter because s/he'll be losing the house soon).

The housing is therefore run down and residents face a dramatic change (probably for the worse). They receive no compensation from the landowner, whose freehold of the land will have meanwhile increased in value as land available for development has become more scarce in the city. Leasehold exists in both working class and middle class areas.

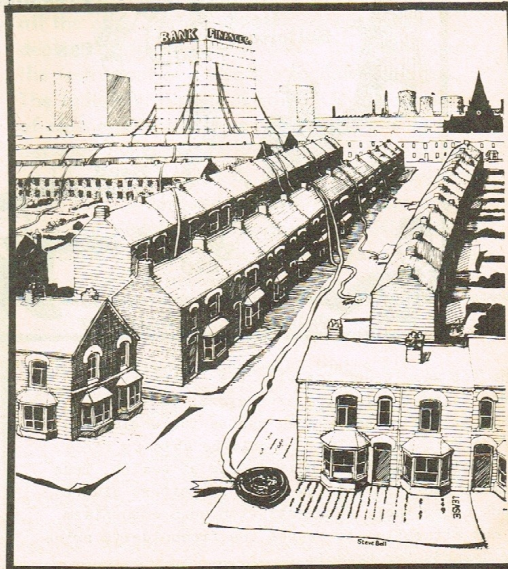
The right to buy the freehold

Pressure and agitation from both working class and middle class leaseholders led to the Leasehold Reform Act (LRA) of 1967 which gave people living in houses on long leases the right to extend their lease or buy their freehold whether the freeholder wants to sell or not.

There are 3 fundamental problems with the LRA however which mean that enfranchising (buying

the freehold) can become a nightmare:

1 The onus is on the leaseholder to do everything. In practice this means starting the process off by giving notice to the freeholder, contacting the appropriate people, negotiating the price, organising the buying process. It's all complicated by there usually being a "chain" of underlessees who have to be negotiated with and bought out, too. A person must have lived in the house for 5 years before s/he buys and having started the process, if s/he backs out, s/he can't try again for another 5 years. It's a daunting business for people with no experience of dealing with property.



2 Because of the nature of the leasehold system the freeholder is usually much better off than the leaseholder (many freeholds are owned by property companies for example). S/he is therefore able to delay, re-negotiate, hold out much longer than the leaseholder, who can probably barely afford the price of the house let alone anything else.

If negotiations aren't easy the leaseholder must ultimately take his/her case to the Lands Tribunal but the cost of doing this effectively prevents many people (In Saltley, Birmingham, even the simplest case cost £360).

3 To use the Act the leaseholder has to pay for the services of a solicitor and valuer to deal with the complex business of valuing and negotiating the chain of ownership and legal interests. Not only that - s/he has to pay the freeholders costs too so a great web of professionals is involved in the process all demanding their 'cut' for services rendered and boosting (sometimes doubling) the final cost to the leaseholder.

Delay & despair

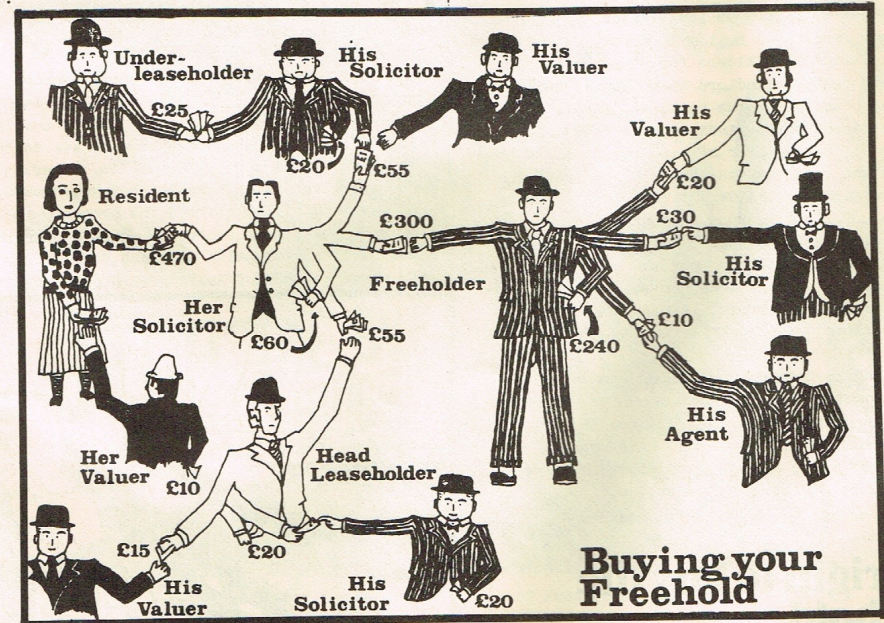
Because of these complications, residents in Saltley have also found the whole process can take up to 2 years.

So, its not surprising that in a survey in Saltley it was found that only 1%-2% of residents a year had actually succeeded in buying their freehold although nearly 50% wanted to and another 17% would under different conditions. 14% had tried and failed and 12% were in the process of trying.

Proposals for reform

In the face of these problems, working class residents have campaigned around the LRA for reform of the legislation. The reforms they proposed would deal with the 3 fundamental problems of the Act:

1 Freehold price - their main proposal was to incorporate a formula into the Act which automatically decides what price should be paid for



The Act wasn't popular with the 'property' professionals (lawyers, surveyors, valuers) when it was passed - they oppose the whole principle that leaseholders should be able to force freeholders to sell their source of wealth. Thus leaseholders in Saltley found solicitors didn't look after their interests with much enthusiasm - not attempting to reduce the freeholder's price or demands for example

the freehold by the tenant. This would limit the ability of the landowner to force up the freehold price because of his/her stronger bargaining position and, secondly, would largely eliminate the need for professional valuers (paid for by the tenant). Norton Residents got the idea for the formula from Ireland where a formula using the interest rate prevailing on the last issue of Government stock is used.



Norton Residents' Committee, 1978.

2 The second proposal is to abolish compensation for intermediary leaseholders and, going further, to eliminate intermediary leaseholders altogether. The tenants association feels they are parasitic on the housing system - the tenant has to buy their interest out as part of the package. Intermediary leaseholds are an integral part of this system. In practice they link the interests of valuers and owners and there's a big market in intermediary interests between dealers. Meanwhile, they add nothing of value to the houses of Saltley.

3 Cutting down the number of professionals: you don't need 4 valuers and 4 solicitors to buy a fridge or car. Why do you need them to buy your freehold? It would all be simpler anyway if (1) and (2) were implemented and campaigners feel one solicitor ought to be able to do all the work. The professions, of course, would object strenuously to this - they want to protect their 'profession' and monopoly.

Leasehold loopholes

Campaigners went as far as possible within the existing legal framework, trying to find ways round the problems eg. all using one solicitor selected for being cheapest but they came up against opposition from the Law Society there. By working together some residents in Saltley were finally helped to buy their freehold and meanwhile a continuing campaign for reform was fought locally and nationally.

The working class tenants in Birmingham and South Wales have not yet been successful in getting legal reform, and it is difficult to predict whether the Tory government's new Housing Bill will contain any of the technical

amendments leasehold groups have proposed to help working class people buy freeholds.

The experiences of the Saltley residents are described in "Leasehold Loopholes", a report produced by the Saltley Community Development Project analysing the leasehold system and the effects of campaigning for legal change on it.

The final chapter of the report draws crucial political conclusions which explain why residents in Saltley and South Wales have failed to change the leasehold system. It shows how leasehold fits into the economic and social relations of our society.

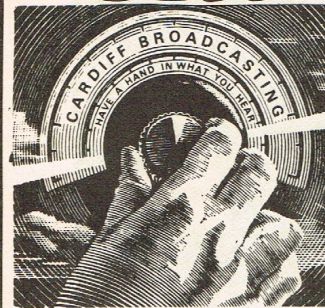
"It is difficult to disentangle leasehold from all the other factors which have caused the decline of this inner city area. It is not simply the instrument of a wealthy landowning class. The Industrial history of Saltley is not simply of class conflict between employers and labour, between the different groups which have employed its labour and housed its people. Leasehold has been used or suffered by different groups at different times. It helps give a specific form to the basic class conflicts which have evolved here ever since Saltley was built". (Leasehold Loopholes)

With thanks to Ann Stewart and John Shutt.

Copies of Leasehold Loopholes (price £1.25 plus 25p post) from Saltley Action Centre, 2 Alum Rock Road, Saltley, Birmingham 8.

The Cardiff Leasehold Reform Group have produced a booklet "Whose Home is it?" containing information on buying freeholds and extending leases. Price 25p. from Riverside Community Centre, Brunel Street, Riverside, Cardiff.

And now for...



Cardiff Broadcasting

Community control over local radio

About 20 towns around the country are about to get the blessing of their own local, commercial radio station. It is the next phase in the spread of this particular bit of civilisation. The BBC is also extending its local radio business.

In Cardiff, when the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) invited people to tender for the right ('franchise') to run the new local commercial radio station, a number of community organisations decided to take a unique step, and attempt to win the contract....and succeeded. Here's how they went about it and how the community is going to keep some direct control over the station

Who controls the media

For community activists in this country democratic control of the media has nearly always meant the hard slog of the community newspaper or magazine. The idea that accountability to Parliament ensures the democracy of the BBC or Independent television and radio is very largely fiction of course. Although the media supposedly provide a 'balance' of views they first choose which views are included in the balance - and that makes 'extremists' of you and me mate.

This is by way of a preamble to Cardiff Broadcasting, the new community radio company which recently won the franchise for the new commercial radio station in this town. There is some reason for watching the station's performance (or listening to it!) as an experiment outside the orthodox mould shaped by the establishment. For a start the new station has some direct democracy about it. Half of the 12 directors are to be elected. They will come from a Community Trust

which will be elected 50% by individuals, 40% by groups and 10% by federated groups (Voluntary Service Council or Trades Council). Note the significance of group participation as well as individual voting.

Public meeting elects Directors

Everybody in the listening area will be entitled to vote. The present community directors were elected at a crowded public meeting and comprise 2 non-conformist clergymen, 2 women activists, 1 Labour Councillor/community worker and 1 Housing activists/Socialist Workers Party member. Selection at the public meeting was necessary because of the short and hectic run up to the interviews at which the IBA was to decide which of the applicants would be granted the franchise.

The public meeting vividly brought home the nature of this sort of 'democracy'. The churches turned out in force in an attempt to win control of the Community Trust, and the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child also had a group of people there.

Help from others

When the IBA advertised at the end of last year inviting applications for the franchise, a group of community and arts activists and journalists raised some money from the Gulbenkian Foundation to help them get the application together.

One full time worker and an office were paid for and local community groups also put in some money. We had to show the scheme was both technically and financially viable, so we got technical help and contacts from Chapter, a local community arts project, and from some local firms and individuals. A brochure outlining the economics of the scheme and inviting investors was put together by a well known firm of accountants, in just the same way as any new commercial venture is promoted.

We were competing against a powerful lobby of the sort of interests and firms who would normally expect to win commercial radio franchises, so we had to raise a substantial sum of money. About £200,000 has already been raised to equip the studio and hire staff. Advertising revenue will pay the running costs and provide the profits for shareholders once the station starts. So within 3 months, with a lot of voluntary help and very hard work, we submitted the application, survived two interviews with the IBA and won the franchise.



Workshops and Action Desk planned

Our application stressed that the programmes would contain more speech, news and information and not perpetual pop drive.

The Community Trust has already started to organise open workshops on different aspects of programming - sport, religion, news, (ethnic) minorities etc. It is clear that the dynamism of the activists is going to be the crucial factor in winning audiences and then advertisers, so that the resort to 'pop' profits won't be necessary.

We aim to have an Action Desk accessible for news and information and as a referral agency for people with problems. A wider aim is to get local people making programmes, demystifying the media and for many of us community activists taking part, it will be a positive pleasure to be employing journalists or at least cooperating with them, instead of featuring always as copy-fodder.

Commercial radio means compromises

Clearly there have had to be compromises built in to the experiment - we didn't raise £400,000 and win the franchise on the basis of either community contact or community control alone. Commercial radio is expected to be profitable so investors can expect to get a measurable return on their money, but they also expect to see their money protected by a conventional commercial set

up. So the other half of the Board of Directors represent and is elected by the financiers investing in the local radio station, as in any normal company. It is undoubtedly this conventional part which convinced IBA that it was a 'controlled experiment' that both matched the Annan Committee and White Paper recommendations of community participation in local radio and guaranteed the financial discipline of aiming at profits to keep investors happy. However, the 50% community control provides a powerful block vote whilst the financiers are in fact only able to own less than 10% of the shares, in order to allow a large number of individual small shareholders.

Another problem is that the IBA can supervise both the content of programmes and veto the personnel appointed to run them - you can see how these radio pioneers can be hedged about.

Threat of Tory intervention

There's nothing in the structure or the compromises made so far to show definitely what is going to happen to this experiment. Leading Tories have already asked if the Welsh Office can intervene to stop the venture, presumably they wanted some of their friends to win the prize instead. Apart from a lot of hard work, we've also been lucky to get the right combination of elements to suit the IBA, and its hard to say whether the same could happen elsewhere.

We hope to go on the air in early summer 1980, so cop an earful if you can, and let us know what you think. Our slogan is "Have a hand in what you hear".

Bob Dumbleton, a Community Director,
Cardiff Broadcasting's address is CB, Chapter,
Canton, Cardiff.

COIN STREET: COMMUNITY OVER THE competition too great

Developments have been coming thick and fast at the Coin Street Public Inquiry since it started in mid-May (see CA No 42, p 11 for the background to this homes v offices battle). What follows is a round up of the main events and issues that are becoming clearer as time passes.

Heron withdraws...

Firstly, what must be seen as a major victory for the community's opposition to the massive office and 400 feet high hotel scheme proposed by Heron Corporation and Commercial Properties. With a statement astounding in its hypocrisy Heron withdrew their application and left the Inquiry and said that they would prepare another scheme but would "wait and see what happened". After their own barrister had spent days quoting irrelevant 36 year old plans to support their own proposals, in direct contradiction to the current, legal plan for the area, Heron had the nerve to say that the Inquiry was taking too long and costing too much. Their statement contained the following hilarious, holier-than-thou comment: "It is apparent that political considerations have pervaded decisions upon which the proposals are based. Politics is a poor substitute for the objectivity required for sensible planning decisions involving major land use planning considerations."

In fact there are a lot of reasons for Heron's withdrawal: their hotel scheme was conceived during the property boom - the market has changed; their scheme was already looking too 'extreme' alongside the so-called compromise proposals put in at first by Greycoat London Estates, but when, three weeks into the Inquiry, Greycoat suddenly and unexpectedly received from the Secretary of State an Office Development Permit for more office space than Heron's scheme, the competition was too great so Heron pulled out. Commercial Properties, whose scheme was meant to complement Heron's, chose not to produce any witnesses to support the statement of their case at the Inquiry and have now left.

political issues raised

So although all sorts of 'market forces' reasons could be found for Heron pulling out (they may still submit another application and try to get it through without a public inquiry - see page 2) in fact, the battle fought by the community



On the day the Public Inquiry opened, the street outside was packed with pensioners, local school kids with placards they had made themselves, Coin Street Action Group members and their supporters, other local groups and the press and TV. The demonstrators marched into the Inquiry, filling the hall and flowing out the door. During the rest of the day, each barrister or solicitor presented the outline of their case (some went on and on, oblivious to the heckling from the public), and were hissed or cheered depending on whether they represented the speculators or the local people. It was a terrific opening to the Inquiry, and a real demonstration of opposition to the developers' plans.

SCORES A VICTORY DEVELOPERS

must be seen as crucial. Heron and their friends expect to win the right to huge profits without public participation - but the community turned out in force, asking pertinent questions and raising the political issues underlying the decisions being made. Without the Coin Street campaign there wouldn't have been a last minute 'compromise' scheme put in by Greycoat containing vague proposals for some public housing. In fact, Greycoat are now preparing a new scheme incorporating 1.3 million square feet of office space - so much for the 'compromise' apparently favoured by the authorities. The community's position has always been solidly against any office development.

community assessor long way to go

After only a couple of weeks it was clear that the whole Inquiry was being run to the advantage of the QC's and to the disadvantage of the Association of Waterloo Groups and other community groups. Not only were the planning barristers running it like a legal trial with witnesses being cross-examined like criminals, but they were also abusing the process by slipping in new evidence for their client's case instead of examining other witnesses' evidence.

the Coin Street Action Group made a series of demands to the Inspector about the way the Inquiry should be run, which included a call for the immediate appointment of a 'community assessor' - someone who could assess the implications for the community of the various planning applications, to sit alongside the Inspector and the other technical assessors. They also called for the Greater London Council architect, who had drawn up the original low rise housing scheme, to be called to appear.

Inquiry stopped

For two days a hundred or more local residents packed the hall and people stood up one after the other to protest and make these demands. Finally, the Inspector was forced to adjourn the Inquiry for several days to wait while the Secretary of State made a decision but only after he had tried to claim that he didn't need a community assessor - he would be able to understand all the social arguments, and if he didn't he would ask (how would he know when he didn't the residents asked?)



However the Minister at the Dept of the Environment turned down the request but said he would ask the Inspector to pay special attention to the social issues! The Inspector also refused to force the GLC to allow their architect to appear.

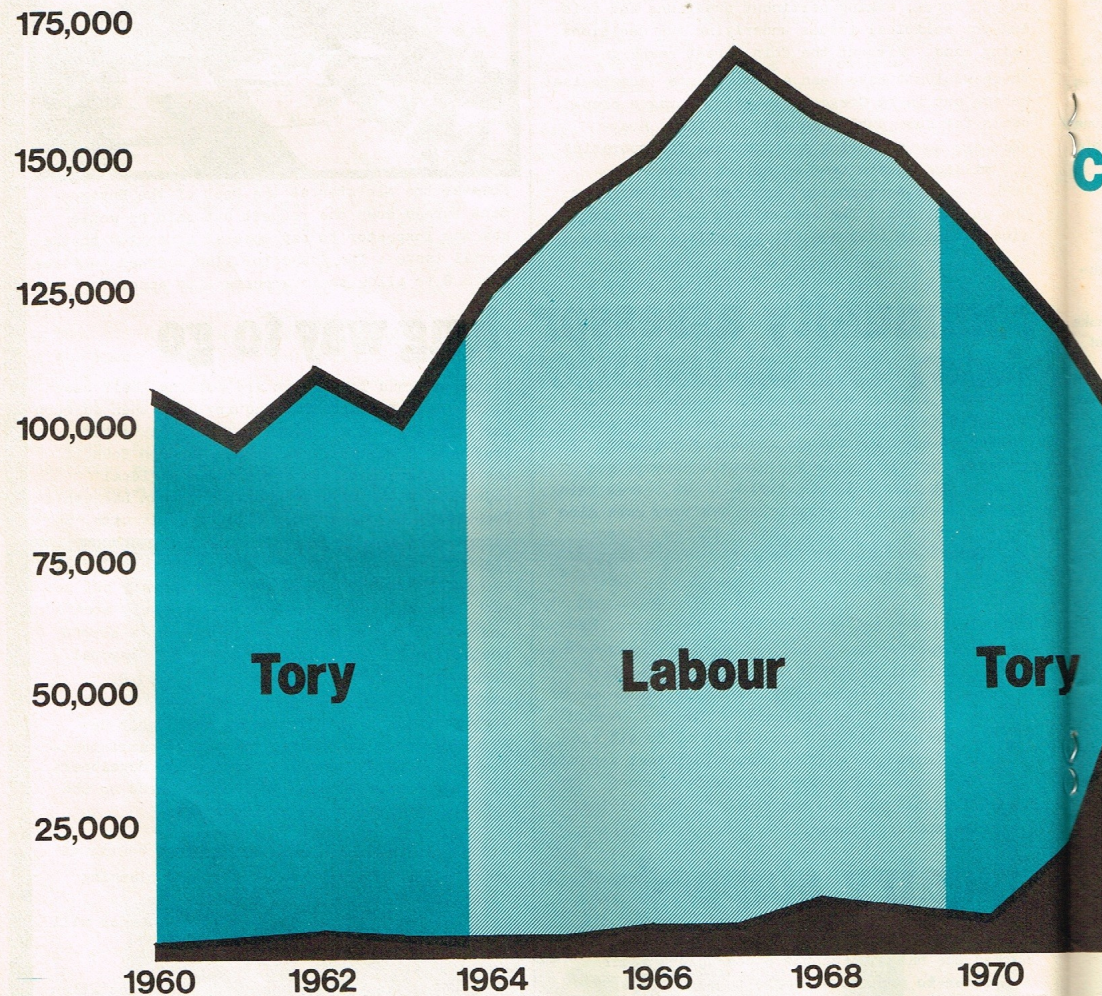
London Weekend Television are putting their case at the end of July. The Inquiry will then adjourn for August and start again in early September. Greycoat, Southwark, the Greater London Council, the Coin Street Action Group and individual objectors still have to appear and then Lambeth's Compulsory Purchase Order will be dealt with. So there's still a long way to go and anything could happen if the last two months are anything to go by. For the local people who have already put so much time and effort into defending their area there is also the awful possibility of a second public inquiry to consider the second Greycoat scheme and possibly a new Heron scheme. Of course there is always the possibility that the Tory government will decide to help their developer friends by restricting public participation in planning proposals. After all, developers like Heron have already laid their cards on the table with their views on Inquiries:

"If participation in such proceedings continues to be a pre-requisite to obtaining a planning permission Heron believes that the time is fast approaching when no development agency will be prepared to promote schemes at all."

If there is any way you can help the Association of Waterloo Groups, with publicity, finance or anything else, contact them as soon as possible.

Thanks to the Association of Waterloo Groups, North Southwark Community Development Group and the Coin Street Action Group. Information from 14, Bayliss Road, London SE1.

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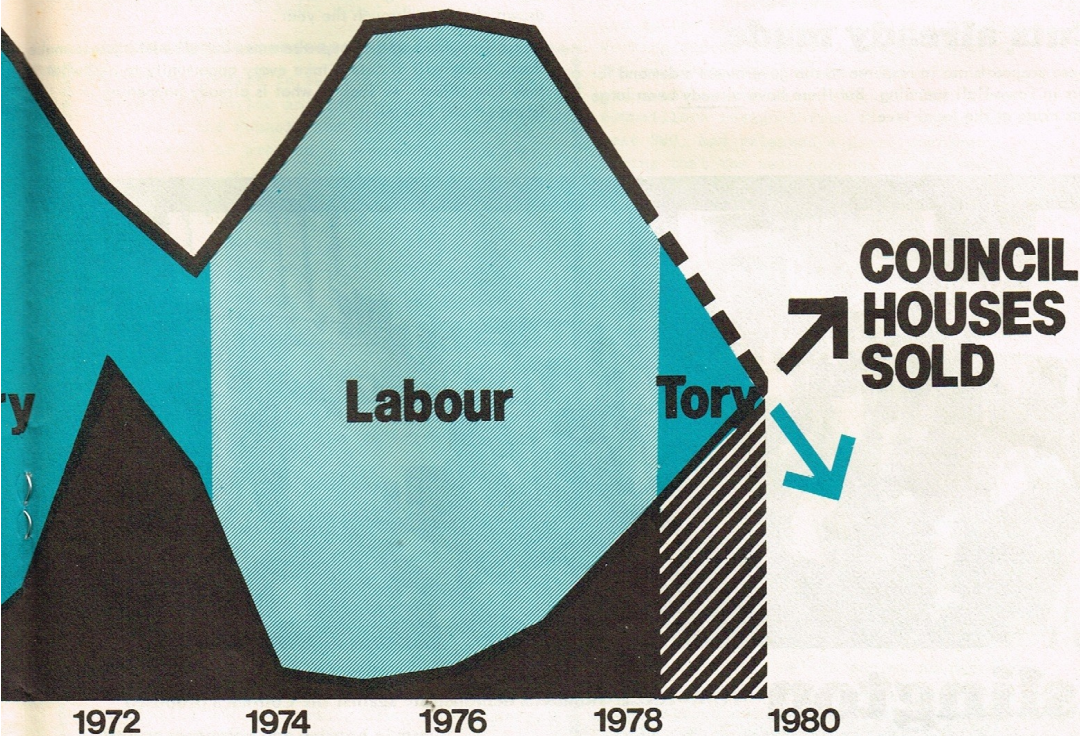


COUNCIL HOUSE-BUILDING *SLASHED*

START THE 1980's!

COUNCIL HOUSES/FLATS COMPLETED

Local Authorities & New Towns in England and Wales



COMMUNITY ACTION No 44 July-Aug 1979

**COUNCIL HOUSES WORTH
£250m SOLD IN 1978**

ALL CUTS ARE BLOODY!

Tories crawl out of the woodwork

The Tory controlled Association of County Councils have said they are confident of persuading the government to accept some of the most clearly right-wing cuts in local services yet to appear. What their proposals will mean is:

- An end to the obligatory provision of education before 6 or after 15 years of age, free nursery schools and school transport, milk and subsidised school meals. School closures to be speeded up, and councils to be free to charge what they like for adult education and not to have to give student grants.
- A delay in enforcing standards of fire protection in old peoples homes, and stopping pocket money for the residents. The repeal of legislation on consumer and environmental protection, Health and Safety at Work Act and the Employment Protection Act. An end to public participation in planning.

Cuts already made

These proposals are in response to the government's demand for cuts in Town Hall spending. But there have already been large cuts made at the local level:

● The Budget contained an immediate 5% or £385 million cut the Rate Support Grant made by central government to finance local services. This has meant councils freezing staff vacancies in all services, delaying building programmes, scrapping proposals for expansion in any services, closing down centres for kids and elderly and stopping community projects, raising rent and rates, and cuts in maintenance and repair of council houses.

● Without having to announce an actual cash cut, the government has effectively stopped the municipalisation programme, simply by forcing councils to get government permission on each acquisition... and approval will rarely be given.

● Permission to borrow for individual housebuilding schemes or improvement programmes, although already approved in principle under Housing Investment Programmes, may still be withdrawn, halfway through the year.

Not all councils will accept the cuts, but all will have to make them. Some will of course take every opportunity to axe what they can. Next, we look at what is already happening in Islington and Liverpool.



Islington

TOWN HALL. Hundreds demonstrate against the Council's proposed cuts in housing and voluntary groups

Recent events in Islington, as forecast in Community Action no 43, have resulted in cuts in a wide range of services and the ending of grants to a number of voluntary groups. This was in spite of a well organised campaign against the cuts including large scale demonstrations at crucial council meetings. Not to

be put off by this expression of popular feeling, the newly entrenched right wing majority in the Labour Group (Labour has 50 out of the 52 council seats) proceeded with some relish to cut off grants to certain groups and reduce spending in all areas of council activity.

Cuts across the board

The cuts total £2.3 millions and include reductions in staff, cuts to the house building programme and in repairs and maintenance and reductions in a wide range of other services. These cuts mark the end of a period in which Islington council, under a centre-left Labour group had pursued high levels of expenditure to combat the problems existing in the borough.

However, early this year, alarmed by forecasts from the finance department of the size of the rate increase needed to fund the programmes over the next few years, the council set up a Central Review Body (CRB) dominated by the right wing of the Council, to undertake a long-term financial review of the Council's activities, to examine how 'effective' its services were. This body was to do in secret the job that should have been done by the normal committee structure. It was a subcommittee of another informal sub-committee, the Policy Advisory Group, which even excludes other councillors from its meetings.

“As there appears to be an almost insatiable demand for advice and information in the Borough, the Council has either to restrict the demand or provide an extremely expensive service. There are several ways of restricting demand :

- By preventing certain client groups from using the service.....
- By not providing certain services.....
- Charging - This might in fact be the most effective method of rationing advice provision. However a nominal charge of say 20p (except for the most simple enquiries) would reduce the charitable stigma of seeking free advice and encourage people to be more self reliant without acting as a major deterrent to those in need.....
- Geographically - in many ways this is the most equitable form of rationing advice..... This discriminates to some extent against the less mobile - the elderly, physically handicapped, and families with young children.
- Queueing, and other ways of making the service unattractive”

This is an extract from one of the confidential documents which was discussed by the council's Special Working Group on voluntary organisations.

Disband the SWGs!

Five special working groups (SWGs) were set up under the CRB on housing management and maintenance, the housing capital programme, council development, council manpower, and voluntary

organisations. Their briefs were to look at overall spending, grants, staffing levels, "value for money" etc. And they met in secret.

Between the working groups being set up and reporting back, the rate increase for 1979/80 was fixed at 32%. The council's original proposal was for a 40% increase in rates, following a small increase the previous (local election) year. However, a borough wide campaign was mounted against the increase. This involved a very wide range of organisations covering the whole political spectrum from the Tax Union, an organisation with links in the extremely right wing national Freedom Association, to the local tenants organisations who saw their services being cut and their housing conditions made worse at the same time as rent and rate increases were being imposed by the council.

Rate increase cut

So the rate increase was reduced to 32% and this led to the £2.3m cuts in services. The Special Working Groups became - surprise, surprise - the means of choosing where the cuts in services and grants were going to fall. Three councillors resigned from the Housing Management SWG, and released a press statement saying that the main purpose of the review was to make cuts in council programmes and services.



No public debate

Because the SWG's met in secret no representations could be made to them, no consultations were carried out with affected groups and there was no public debate of the alternatives under discussion. Where reports to the SWG's have been leaked, everyone's worst fears are confirmed. For example, one idea considered, though rejected, was that people should be charged every time they received advice in order to restrict the demand from the public and hence the number of advice agencies needed in the Borough.

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Four neighbourhood projects which give support and advice to groups and individuals in their area were closed on the grounds that the goals for which they had been set up had been achieved! The council's intention is to shift the advice work that would have gone to these groups onto the Citizens Advice Bureaux but no approach had been made to CABx as to whether they were willing or even able to take it on.

No community project is safe

The way in which the cuts have taken place means that no local project wholly or partly funded by the council can consider itself safe in future.

Opposition to the cuts has come from tenants associations, voluntary organisations and local union branches. The voluntary organisations in Islington formed an action committee to fight the cuts and sponsored the demonstrations against them.

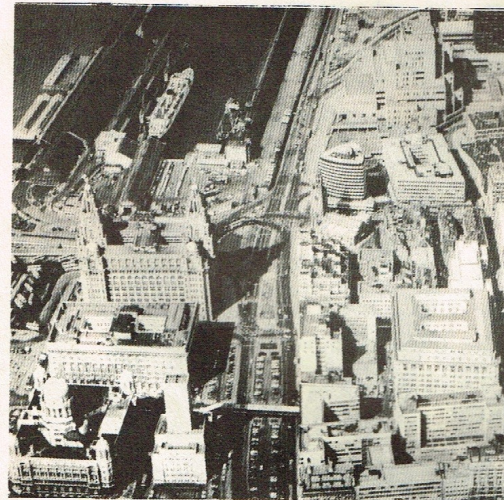
Picketing

The campaign against the cuts is now gathering speed, with the start of an indefinite picket of the Town Hall organised by ACTSS, the union to which most of the local projects' workers belong. Post Office workers have already refused to cross the picket line. The other unions to which Islington Council workers belong are being asked to support the one day strike, rally and day of action on July 31st, the day of the next full council meeting. Other council workers are being asked not to undertake any work normally done by the community projects, or any work resulting from the Town Hall picket.

The cuts will affect council workers, tenants and all the people who depend upon the council's services, so the fight will have to involve all those groups.

For further information contact: Islington Voluntary Action Council, 309 Upper Street, London N1. tel. 226 4862.

THE PRICE OF CUTS



In March 1979 Liverpool City Council asked committees to find ways of reducing their budgets to compensate for pay settlements of 10% to their workers. Liverpool had originally budgeted for 5% i.e. the level the Labour Government was prepared to support with grants in line with its pay policy, so savings equal to the further 5% were required.

The Reports to Committees by two Directors, of Social Services and Education, show how services would be affected and this is shown in the table. Both reports are 'theoretical' in that it may be decided to change the balance of savings between the range of activities Departments are responsible for, but they still illustrate the type of impact they will have.

Social Services: the elderly will suffer

In a full year just over £1 million will have to be cut which is 5.2% of the total budget. Excluding savings already planned this leaves £903,000 for 1980/81. The Director feels the cuts should not be concentrated and comments:

* 'almost every type of service will be affected' He puts forward the option of a 24 hour emergency team because:

* 'The scale of cuts would exclude large groups e.g. the elderly, from much routine social work so the emergency team would provide help with acute crisis'

* 'The public should be made fully aware of the cuts and must not expect the service provided in the past.'

The Tory budget and subsequent statements have outlined that local authorities will have to cut 6½% from their plans for this year and up to 7½% more in 1980/81. It has been stressed that:

1. The cuts are not one-off but the beginning of a continuous cut back.
2. Legislation is being considered to prevent rate increases making good the cuts, should this prove necessary.

Can the savings be achieved by eliminating waste and without seriously affecting services?

HOW SERVICES COULD BE AFFECTED

The Department can only provide the service the City is prepared to pay for'.

- * 'The Director would like to stress the essential interdependence of all social services. Savage cuts in one (day care centres for the elderly) produce a devastating effect on others (residential services for the vulnerable elderly which break down without day care support)'.

Education: resources already stretched

The report deals with the £2.8 million to be saved this year, but £3.3 million would be needed for the full year 1980-81. The Education Committee resolved that redundancies should not be considered but the Director comments:

- * 'To suggest means by which such a sum might be found without serious damage being caused to levels of service and job opportunities is well nigh impossible....creating redundancies cannot be avoided with this scale of cuts'. 83% of the budget is made up of salaries and other

inescapable commitments e.g. debt charges, rates, statutory duties, so -

- * 'any cuts would have to be concentrated on areas which have already suffered heavily... year after year economies have been made in providing books and desks etc. ... the scope for this type of saving has virtually disappeared ... and left many schools in a state of disrepair and without decent supplies'.

As an alternative to across-the-board cuts the Director has provided the option of cutting non-statutory services by half. Two of his statements are enough to highlight the effects:

- Nursery Education - 'such a cut back could not fail to be greeted by the public as unacceptable - families have come to rely on it as a vital element of pre-schooling'
- Youth and Community Services - 'the effect on the morale of the voluntary sector and public would be deeply damaging and take many years to repair'.

Service	Amount £000's	Effect
SOCIAL SERVICES CUTS:		
RESIDENTIAL SERVICES FOR:		
The Elderly and Handicapped	176	* Shut 2 small local authority hostels * Reduce places in others by 28 * Close one group home * Reduce hostel places by 13 * Close 1 large children's home * Close 1 reception centre.
Mentally Ill/Mentally Handicapped	32	
Children	194	
SUPPORT SERVICES FOR:		
The Handicapped	49	* Close 1 handicapped persons centre * Partially close another * Reduce aids, telephones etc.
The Elderly	56	* Reduce opening of a day care centre from 7 to 5 days * Limit opening of rest centres. * Charge £1.50 for 'free' bus passes to those retired but under 67
Mentally Ill	38	* Reduce places at training centres by 35 or close 1 (of 4)
Children	78	* Close 1 day nursery * Reduce grants to families
General Services	280	* Cut welfare meals to 100 people * Withdraw home helps from 325 people * Reduce grants to voluntary bodies * 15 fewer social workers in training (2 of total) and 1 fewer training staff
Total	903	(4.5% of total net budget of £19.8M)
EDUCATION CUTS:		
Nursery Education	7	* Close 2-3 nursery classes
Primary/Secondary Schools	1,155	* Teacher redundancies of about 225
Further Education & Colleges of Education	1,016	* Further redundancies (contributing to a total of about 400 in education) plus substantial reduction in student grants
Youth & Community Services	59	* 15 redundancies or 5% cut in grants to voluntary bodies
Personal & other services	563	* Withdrawal of free travel, milk, and meals to poor families, fewer clothing allowances, careers officers etc.
Total	2,800	
Alternatively a 50% reduction in non-statutory services ie		
Nursery education	750) halving present service
Evening Institute Provision	148)
Youth & Community Services	1,008)
Further Education Grants plus	491	
Colleges of Education cuts	414	* Close 1 college or share between them
Total	2,800	(2.4% of total net budget of £116.9M)

Hard times ahead

The cuts the Tories are looking for nationally are way beyond those described for Liverpool. The level of savings thought to be necessary was defined before the announced reductions in the Rate Support Grant, cash limits, and the realization of significantly higher inflation. The type of cuts outlined for Education, may well have to be trebled therefore if as a service it took its share of reductions.

► -Present services are already deficient having suffered several years of cuts.

► -Local authority services are labour intensive and redundancies would be inevitable

► -Unemployment in Liverpool is already estimated at 21% for the City and 25% for the inner areas by the City Planning Officer.

The Liverpool exercises show that dramatic cuts in service and redundancy will occur with smaller budget reductions than are planned nationally.



ACCESS FOR school kids surveys

Fieldhouse school is a small school in Rochdale which caters for 70 physically handicapped pupils. The school entered a competition in which they had to look at local buildings and facilities from the viewpoint of a disabled person and make suggestions for improvements - and they won! Here's their report on how they did it, what they found and what the experience taught them about how planners in particular treat disabled people and how disabled people react.

The School wins a prize

We are a small, intimate and very happy school and so everyone was delighted when we were lucky enough to win a prize for our Access Project. There are 70 pupils here and the range of handicaps is very varied, there being children with asthma, epilepsy and heart diseases as well as spastic children, spina-bifida cases and those with muscular dystrophy. We also have children with multiple handicaps, including two blind children who are also confined to wheel-chairs.

When we started our project on Access for the Disabled it was, at first, with a feeling of obligation. We felt that if we sat back and let other people research this important subject, then we would be guilty of the apathy that we are always grumbling about in others.

We learnt a lot

Once the project got underway we found it not only interesting and enlightening, but at times positively amazing. It also turned out to be a great deal of fun. One thing that we realised about ourselves was that we live in a fairly sheltered environment during the school years. We have our own transport and we always have enough helpers to carry disabled children when access to buildings is difficult. Many of the things that children take for granted here in school, like swimming les-

sons, visits to museums and theatres, can be impossible for a disabled person trying to cope independently with life.

Other problems discovered

One great result of our project work from our point of view, was that we stopped being pre-occupied with ourselves and became very involved in the problems of others. We interviewed both old people and disabled people and found out about their problems, and then we set out to discover for ourselves the accessibility (or otherwise) of buildings in our town. Many of the older buildings were completely inaccessible to anyone in a wheelchair, but what angered us most was that the same fault was found in some of the new buildings in



THE DISABLED

situation in Rochdale



town. Many designers seem to think that if you provide a special toilet for the disabled then justice has been done - even if that toilet is at the bottom of a flight of steps, as it is in Rochdale's newest community theatre!

We had good fun too

We had many hilarious moments during our research. We actually managed to get one of our children in a wheel-chair jammed half way into and half way out of a toilet. It took much pushing and pulling and a great deal of giggling before we were able to free her.

Another funny moment happened when the curator of our local art gallery said that wheel-chairs could get into the art gallery by going round the side and using a platform and pulley. We had visions of Carol (our guinea-pig of the day) being hoisted up the outside of the building by block and tackle. The actual arrangement was for wheel-chairs to go into the building by a side entrance and use the large 'dumb waiter' lift normally used to take pictures into the gallery. What the gentleman had failed to realise was that a new road had been constructed by the side of the art gallery and the only way to reach the side entrance was to wheel frantically for 15 yards the wrong way up a dual carriage way. We decided not to bother.

Thoughtlessness by planners

We found many frustrating examples of thoughtlessness on the part of the planners. A prime example is the town's newest swimming pool. We were allocated weekly sessions at this pool 18 months ago because we were told "it caters for the disabled". The person whose words I have just quoted really believed what he was saying. In all fairness the pool does have access for wheel-chairs. It also has a special toilet beautifully labelled 'Ambulant Persons Toilet' which is used as a store cupboard. All the obvious signs of access into the building are there but once in the changing rooms there is nowhere private for a disabled person to change (the cubicles are too small) and the young disabled children that we take swimming each week have to be changed on the wet changing floor because no changing benches are provided.

If the planners had spent just 10 minutes consulting a teacher of the disabled, or a disabled swimmer, the new pool could have been superbly equipped for all its customers and at little extra cost. As it is, the money that has already been spent in providing special toilets etc. will be wasted because very few disabled people will be prepared to go through the indignity of struggling out of their undergarments in full view of the public.

Need for action and protest

Finally I think I must mention one of the more disturbing aspects that we found in our project. This was that there was a certain amount of apathy on the part of many disabled people themselves. The most frequent answer we received when we asked cinemas and other places why disabled people were not catered for was "Because they never come". Many disabled people we talked to admitted that they hardly ever bothered to go anywhere except their own special centre. I know that many of them had given up because they had been frustrated so often but, unless disabled people shout loudly and make a nuisance of themselves if necessary, then it is very easy for the public and the planners to forget that they exist.

Irene Sullivan Fieldhouse School.

Thanks also to Chris Drinkwater, Rochdale Voluntary Action.

We are hoping to have an article soon from the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation whose aims are for all segregated facilities to be replaced with ones that physically impaired people can use. This includes the need for the financial, medical, technical, educational and other help which are vital to gain independence - in mobility, work, and everyday life.

S. WALES TENANTS VISIT N. EAST TENANTS

After a two year fight tenants from the Glynstaff Housing Estate, Pontypridd, South Wales, won a major victory. The council will be putting in gas central heating to replace costly electric heating

Many tenants in the North East are faced with the same problems and the Tyne and Wear Resource Centre arranged for tenants from Pontypridd to come and talk to tenants in Sunderland, Gateshead and Newcastle who are fighting against high electric bills.

DIRECT ACTION

The message brought by the tenants was that they won by direct action. At the start of their campaign they limited action to writing letters, petitions, and some lobbying. This had no effect. The Council refused to do anything and the tenants stepped up their campaign. Direct action was used. This started with 4 women from the estate chaining themselves to the Town Hall railings for 24 hours, and was

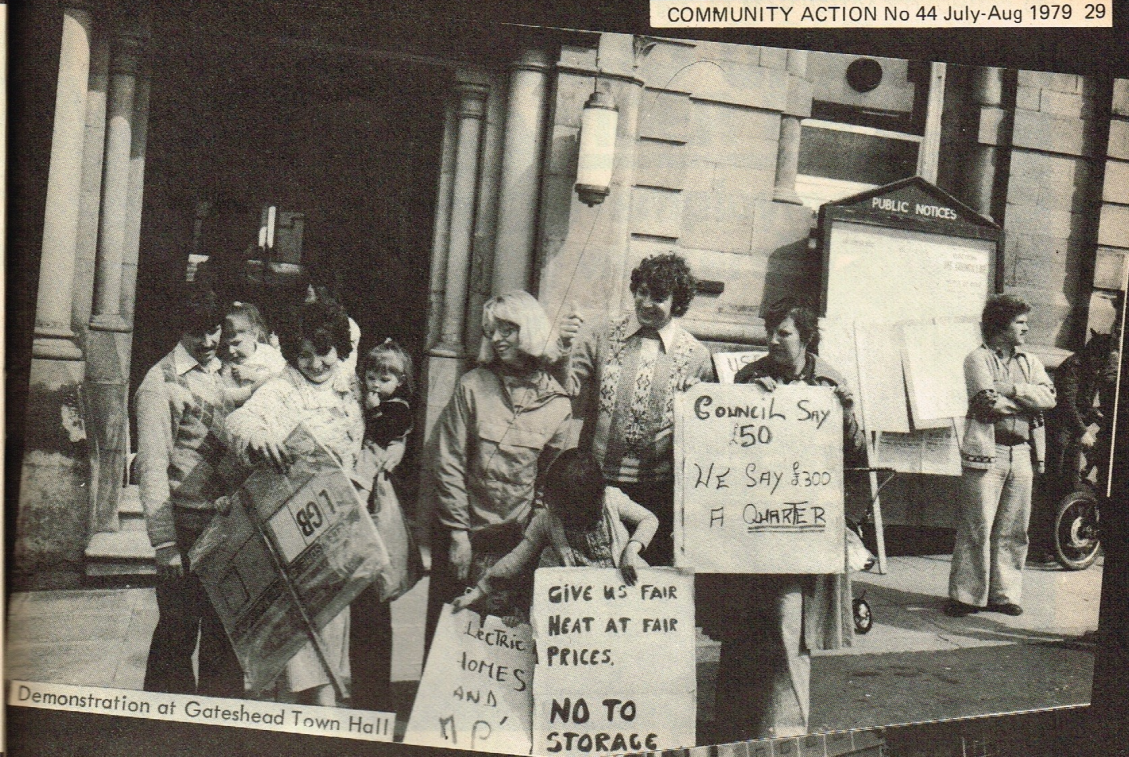
followed by occupations of the Town Hall and demonstrations at Council meetings. This brought victory. The Council were finally forced to agree to change the heating system and work is now underway to put gas central heating into the 250 houses.

IDEAS SHARED

Five members of the Action Group and their children came to Tyneside and went to meetings with tenants from St Cuthberts Village, Gateshead; Churchwalk flats, Newcastle; and Moorgate and Carley Hill, Sunderland. The meetings were a big success with local tenants sharing experiences and learning from the successes and failures of the Pontypridd tenants action. June Joab from St Cuthberts Action Group said "They were full of enthusiasm and really helped push us forward" The visitors were able to join the St Cuthberts tenants in their demonstration against Gateshead Council's decision to put in storage heaters.



Pontypridd tenants chained to Town Hall railings



Demonstration at Gateshead Town Hall



South Wales tenants join St Cuthberts Action Group demonstration outside Gateshead Town Hall

SHIPYARD CLOSURES-



Why we started investigating

In May of this year the North Tyneside Trades Council set up a Working Party to investigate and show the impact on the area and the social and economic costs of further large-scale redundancies in the Shipbuilding Ship repair and Marine Engineering Industries. The initiative for the Working Party came from delegates who worked in the yards, concerned at the lack of information about the future of their industry on Tyneside. Everybody was aware that the industry was suffering its most severe crisis since the 30's and that British Shipbuilders had stated that thousands of jobs had to go, but nobody knew how this would affect shipbuilding on the Tyne, their own yard or their job.

So now the Working Party is involved in the preparation of a Social Audit which is looking at the social and economic costs of redundancies to central and local government, the local community and on the workers and their families.

The original intention was that we would gather as much information on British Shipbuilders' proposals for redundancies and closures as possible (as contained in their Corporate Plan) for distribution to delegates within the industry. However, realising the seriousness of the situation we decided to look in detail at the ways in which large-scale redundancies would affect the whole area.

What the Social Audit will cover

The Social Audit will be in five main sections: The first will look at the current world crisis affecting the industry stressing the problems facing the UK industry, and will describe the recent attempts that have been made to deal with the crisis ie. Shipyard Modernisation Loans, the Construction Grant Scheme, Cost Escalation Insurance, Credit Schemes and the Intervention

Fund.

On the question of state support for the industry it is fair to say that if the Labour Government had not provided the amount of support it did over the last two years then a dozen big shipyards would now be without any work at all and over 19,000 jobs would be at risk.

N. TYNESIDE TRADES COUNCIL EXAMINES THE WIDER EFFECTS

What chances of re-employment for redundant workers

The second section of the audit will analyse the industrial and social context of large scale redundancies for Tyneside. It will locate the importance of the shipbuilding industry to the local economy and provide details of the levels of unemployment related to the number of jobs available in the area.

This last point on the availability of jobs in the area is very important. The re-employment prospects of any worker made redundant is crucial to the social and economic consequences of British Shipbuilders' employment policy.

The three major factors which affect re-employment are:

- the age of the workforce;
- the skills of the workforce;
- the local employment situation.

age of the workers

Of the 71,708 workers employed by British Shipbuilders throughout the country, 46% are aged 45 and over and 22% are over 55. It is the 16,066 workers who are over 55 (approx. 5,000 are employed in Yards within Tyne & Wear) that are most likely to suffer a prolonged period of unemployment if laid off, for the following reasons:

- 1 employers are less likely to hire older workers;
- 2 many will have difficulty in adapting to other employment or in obtaining retraining for jobs outside the industry, particularly in the case of skilled steel workers;
- 3 older workers tend to live near to the yards and are less likely to move to other areas to find alternative employment.

The comment "Shipbuilding is more than just a job, it is a way of life" still holds true in the shipbuilding and ship repairing industries where there is still a very strong industrial identity and community spirit amongst shipyard workers.

workers' skills

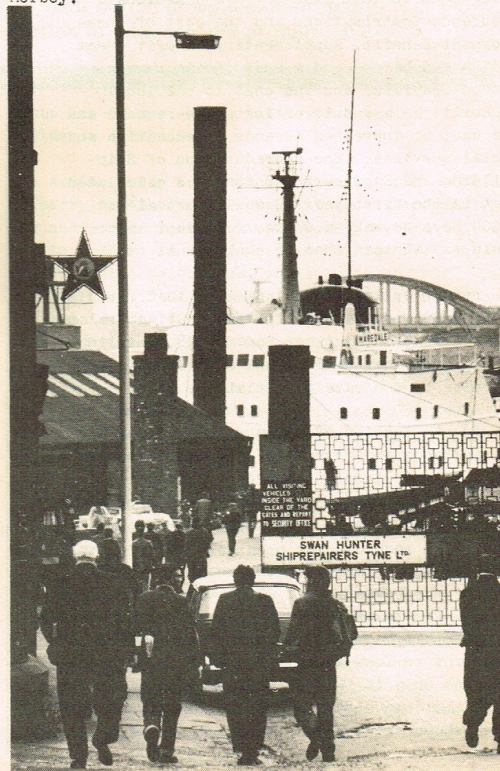
Shipbuilding employment can be divided into three categories: (i) skilled steelworkers, (ii) outfit

and other tradesmen, (iii) unskilled manual.

The 15,853 skilled steelworkers (over 7,500 of whom are within Tyne & Wear) who are the largest sector of shipbuilding employment, are also the most vulnerable in terms of alternative job prospects if they are made redundant. Past experience has shown that when skilled steelworkers are laid off they tend to wait for re-employment in their local areas.

local employment

Employment in UK merchant shipbuilding is concentrated in three areas of high unemployment. Almost 90% of British Shipbuilders' workers in merchant yards work in the North East (Tyne, Wear and Tees, have 50%) on the Clyde and the Mersey.



On Tyneside, shipbuilding, ship repairing and marine engineering provide the second largest source of employment in manufacturing industries, employing almost 20,000 people, approximately 11,000 of whom are directly employed in shipbuilding. A further 4,000 jobs are indirectly dependent upon shipbuilding. Almost 1,500 jobs have already been lost in merchant shipbuilding on Tyneside in the past two years. A recent study carried out by Newcastle University on 745 of the 1152 men made redundant in February 1978 at Swan Hunters found that only 50 men - just 7% - had found new jobs by the beginning of this year.

Further redundancies in an area which already has over 40,000 unemployed will obviously make this situation worse. The figures tell their own story: for example there are over 6,700 skilled craftsmen unemployed, most of whom are skilled steelworkers such as welders, platers and shipwrights. At the present time on Tyneside

there are over 600 unemployed welders and only one vacancy. There are 568 platers and shipwrights unemployed and only eight vacancies - a ratio of 71:1.

The worst prospects are for unskilled manual workers. Over one-third of the local unemployed are unskilled. There are currently over 13,000 labourers unemployed with only 36 vacancies, a ratio of 371:1. The same is true for Wearside, Teeside, Merseyside and Clydeside.

Given the likelihood of even more redundancies as a consequence of the proposals contained in British Shipbuilders' Corporate Plan and the decision of the present Government to reduce the level of subsidy to the industry (they have had to accept that there is no prospect of finding buyers for British Shipbuilders' merchant yards) and the poor chances of finding alternative work, what are the economic and social costs of redundancies?

Counting the real costs of redundancies

The third section of the audit will look at the social and economic costs of redundancies: the cost to British Shipbuilders' and the Government of redundancy payments under the Shipbuilding Redundancy Payments Scheme; the cost to the Government in lost Income Tax and National Insurance Contributions and the cost of Unemployment Benefit, Supplementary Benefit, Rent and Rate Rebates, and a host of other means-tested benefits, and the cost to the local authority as a result of lost rate revenue and the cost of increased demands on education and social services. The Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions has calculated that in the first year it would cost almost £3000 more to make a worker redundant than it would to maintain them in employment.

One recent estimate has indicated that for every 1000 redundancies it will cost central and local government between £6m and £8.5 million over a five year period, and more with an increase in the rate of inflation.

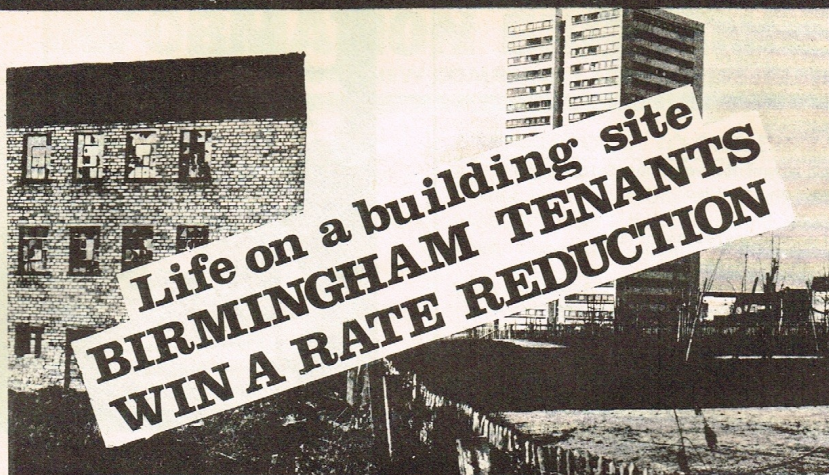
The fourth section of the audit will consider the indirect employment effects of redundancies on local suppliers and sub-contractors.

Finally, the fifth section will compare the effects of redundancies on a yard by yard basis, and show their impact on the local community. Many of the workers live close to the yards and so the effects of redundancies will be heavily concentrated on particular neighbourhoods. It is important to look at what the effects of a significant drop in income over a long period will be in the community, i.e. on the families involved, local shops, businesses, pubs, clubs etc.



The information in the social audit will be distributed to the Yard and Office Committees on the Tyne as ammunition for their own campaigns to fight redundancies. It will be part of the Trades Councils' contribution to widen the debate and action on the question of further shipyard redundancies and closures within the community. The area already has an unacceptably high level of unemployment and further job loss will be opposed not only at work but also within the community. The threat of thousands more redundancies will destroy a major part of the manufacturing base of Tyneside. It will stop forever the possibility of skilled training for hundreds of young workers and seriously threaten the traditional skills which the workers of Tyneside, Wearside, Teeside, Clydeside and Merseyside have developed over many generations.

John Foster, Secretary, North Tyneside Trades Council, 25 Roxburgh Terrace, Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear.



As anyone who regularly reads Community Action will realise, the standards of much of the housing in Birmingham, Britain's 'second city', leave a lot to be desired. CA 40 reported that the city's Urban Renewal Programme was well behind schedule. Balsall Heath is an inner city area of Birmingham which has areas of housing designated as Housing Action Areas and General Improvement Areas but it also has a new area of Council estate housing, the Calthorpe Park East Estate. Part of the estate is finished but the rest is still a building site, which is miserable for the residents. The article describes the formation of their action group and their mass application to a Valuation Court for a rate reduction to take account of their conditions.

Calthorpe Park East is the result of the council's original redevelopment plans, where it was intended to clear areas of old housing and build new houses on a rolling programme. However, things have not gone smoothly. Besides the old houses, there were many small industries in the area and re-locating and purchasing their factories etc. has taken longer than expected. The result is that new houses have been built on the cleared land, while the adjacent factories etc. have quickly become derelict. There have also been changes in plans and delays in construction, two building firms have gone bust on the job, which meant residents have been moved in while demolition and building has continued. New roads and pavements have been slow in coming while the old ones incorporated in the plan have been ruined by heavy contractors lorries. The residents found themselves living on one very large building site. At the moment, there are 250 houses occupied with plans to build a further 266 over the next few years.

Action group formed

Although at first isolated, the tenants quickly found there were many problems they could all identify with and in March of 1978, a residents

group was formed - the Calthorpe Park East Residents Action Group.

The Action Group began to campaign for the council to carry out the redevelopment in a less harmful way and to see that amenities were provided on the estate. There is only one post box in the area and no public telephones, shops, pubs or entertainment. Letters were sent, petitions prepared, individual council officers responsible were identified e.g. Estate Managers, Environmental Health Officers, Highways Dept., and complaints were made directly. On one occasion, the tenants hired a mini-bus and 15 of them went to the Housing Department and "camped" there until seen by the Director. But despite this and the lobbying of local councillors, nothing happened. It was then decided when new rate increases were proposed, that the tenants should seek a reduction in rates.

The Action Group approached the Balsall Heath Advice Centre who prepared a short paper on what is meant to be provided by the rates, and how much was being spent by the local authority on different items. A public meeting was then called which was held in June last year, and the Group decided to apply en masse for a rate reduction, on the grounds that:-

1 The estate was an eyesore due to the accumulation of rubbish around their homes, (there were problems with 'fly tipping'), and because of the many derelict buildings still standing.

2 Roads and pavements were not being maintained or provided.

3 There were no general amenities provided in the area.

Public meeting

At the meeting, forms were distributed so that residents could apply for the reductions and street representatives took away more forms for completion. In the event, 141 out of a total of 170 households on the estate at that time applied.

It was decided that all the forms should be delivered to the local Valuation Office at the same time by a deputation from the Group. It was the first time that Birmingham City Council had received such an application.

Derisory offer

The Valuation Officer at first argued that all the applications should be treated individually, but after realising the work involved in this for the council, accepted that the applications should be treated as a block covering the whole estate, and for the Action Group to represent all the tenants involved.

There then followed visits from the Valuation Officer when an offer of a 7½% reduction was made. The Group felt this was derisory and immediately rejected it, putting in a claim for a 25% reduction, which in turn was not accepted. After long delays, the case finally came to the Valuation Court in April this year

The sorts of things you can look at in deciding whether to apply for a rate reduction

You can consider applying for a rate reduction if you lack any of the following or if the service provided by the Council is poor :-

refuse disposal, rubbish tips, schools, parks and recreation areas, maintenance of open spaces, maintenance of roads

or if general amenities are missing like shops, pubs, telephone boxes etc.

HOWEVER, rating is quite a technical business and you will need to consider the way in which rates are calculated and what factors are taken into consideration on an Appeal to be sure that you collect the right sort of evidence.



and representatives of the Group attended, armed with photographic evidence. In summing up the Chairman of the court expressed his concern that the council had failed to act on the complaints and expressed sympathy that residents were living in 'such appalling conditions'. The court then awarded a reduction of 15% in the rates to all but one applicant, and back dated this to April 1978. The one exception, whose house was not a part of the main estate, was awarded a 5% reduction.

Victory won

The reduction is only temporary and will be reviewed every 12 months, but the Group feel that a worthwhile victory has been gained. The onus is now on the rating authorities to see that things are improved and amenities provided if they want to increase the rates. This won't however, stop the Group campaigning for improvements if the council are slow in making them and the Group is at present negotiating for a community house or flat to be provided on the estate for meeting, activities etc.

For further information contact Trudie Ballard, Secretary C.P.E.R.A.G., 24 Hampden Retreat, Calthorpe Park East Estate, Birmingham 12.

FURTHER INFORMATION

In Community Action no.11 the Old Town Tenants Association of Canning Town London described how they found out how rating works and how to compile evidence for the Valuation Court. They lived in a redevelopment area. Copies of their application are available from CA for 45p and a large SAE. In CA no.37 tenants in Lewisham described their application, made on the grounds of increased traffic nuisance and noise. They have a report of the case available from Malcolm Phillips, Telegraph Hill Neighbourhood Council, 170 New Cross Road, London SE14. 25p.

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

REPORTS · PAMPHLETS · BULLETINS · NEW COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS · PAPERBACKS

HOMELESS? KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Free to individuals, 20p to organisations. SHAC, 189a Old Brompton Road, London SW5.

This is an outline guide to the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act, aimed at people who are homeless or facing homelessness. It is very short, runs through the main points of the Act, explains what Council's should do to help, gives a few practical hints, and stresses that advice should be sought if the Council is unco-operative.

A GUIDE TO THE HOUSING (HOMELESS PERSONS) ACT

Free, from Student Community Action, Joint Students Union, Park Place, Cardiff.

Cardiff SCA and the Cardiff Homelessness Group have produced a short pamphlet which is a straight forward guide to the Act, summarising the duties of the housing authorities and intended for use both by homeless people and advisors. They also have a pocket size summary of this containing contact addresses for people in Cardiff who are homeless.

DISTRAINT IN SOUTHWARK

Southwark Group of Tenants Associations, Southwark Rights Umbrella Group, 190 Southwark Park Road, London SE16.

Has brief notes on all the main activities, demonstrations, lobbies organised by the committee in 1978. Also includes the Pensioners Charter of Demands.



UNION available from Tower Hamlets Trades Council c/o 196 Cable Street, London E1. First issue free, subsequently 10p.

'Union' is the paper of the Tower Hamlets Trades Council, newly formed from the separate Trade Councils of Poplar, Bethnal Green and Stepney. It aims to deal with all aspects of trade union activity both in the Borough and outside it, to reflect the ideals and hopes of the working people of the area and to inform people of events and struggles in all the different affiliated trade unions. The first issue includes articles on the local health service, micro-electronics, the under-fives, direct labour and an appreciation of Blair Peach.

A WORKERS GUIDE TO OFFICE HAZARDS

25p + 15p p&p. By North East Trade Union Studies Information Unit and South Tyneside NALGO. From TUSIU, Southend, Fernwood Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2

5000 accidents in offices are reported each year where workers have to take more than 3 days off work. This pamphlet examines the various aspects of offices which can cause accidents eg office layout, seating, lighting, floor coverings, fire hazards etc. Also covers office machines, aspects of the working environment which can cause stress, and a final section on organising for safety.

coventry news
JUNE
10p. no.2

Inside....
features on...
LOCAL RADIO
& **PLAY**
PLUS news
whats on &
services

COVENTRY NEWS

10p + 7p post from c/o 13 High Street, Coventry.

A new paper in which the first three issues have covered health in Coventry, Midland Community Radio, campaign round-up on play facilities, cuts in public spending and much more.

CAMPAIGN REPORT 1978: Greater London

Pensioners and Trades Union Action Committee. Secretary, Peter James, 194 Queensbridge Road, London E8.

Last year Southwark Housing Committee decided that council tenants who fall into arrears with their rent should have their belongings taken away and sold by the council's bailiffs. This pamphlet attacks this medieval practice as being both immoral and ineffective and demands the abolition of the legal right of distraint. Anyway arrears account for only 4.28% of total rents collected - and much of those arrears are caused by the DHSS paying rents to the Council 13 weeks retrospectively for those tenants receiving Supplementary Benefits, and only about a third of tenants eligible for rent rebates actually receive them.

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

REPORTS · PAMPHLETS · BULLETINS · NEW COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS · PAPERBACKS

WHAT SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

£1. from After Six Housing Advisory Service, 48 William IV Street, London WC2.

This is After Six's submission to the DHSS on the Supplementary Benefit Review (see CA No 41). As a Housing Advisory service After Six is mainly concerned with the effect the proposals outlined in the Review would have on claimants' housing problems, and the conclusion is that their present problems would be considerably worsened. The report is in 3 sections - the first deals with the housing problems of claimants, and the solutions open to them within the present SB system. The second section is a criticism of the Review (especially housing provision) and the third contains After Six's recommendations:- that SB payments should more closely reflect the state of the market for rented accommodation e.g. provision should be made for paying deposits etc.; rent ceilings should be abolished.

THE INFLATABLES MANUAL, 20p + 10p post.

From Community Action, Sheffield Polytechnic Students Union, Phoenix Building, Pond St. Sheffield S12 BW

A manual produced as a result of the Sheffield Student Community Action inflatables project. It includes suggestions about where to get money for materials, workers etc., transport and premises, as well as fairly detailed explanations, with diagrams, on building and operating inflatables.

The information provided is both practical, and provides a general discussion about the problems experienced in such a project, and how inflatables can be used on summer playschemes etc., and therefore would be a valuable asset to any community group contemplating such a scheme.

MONEY DOWN THE DRAIN, 10p

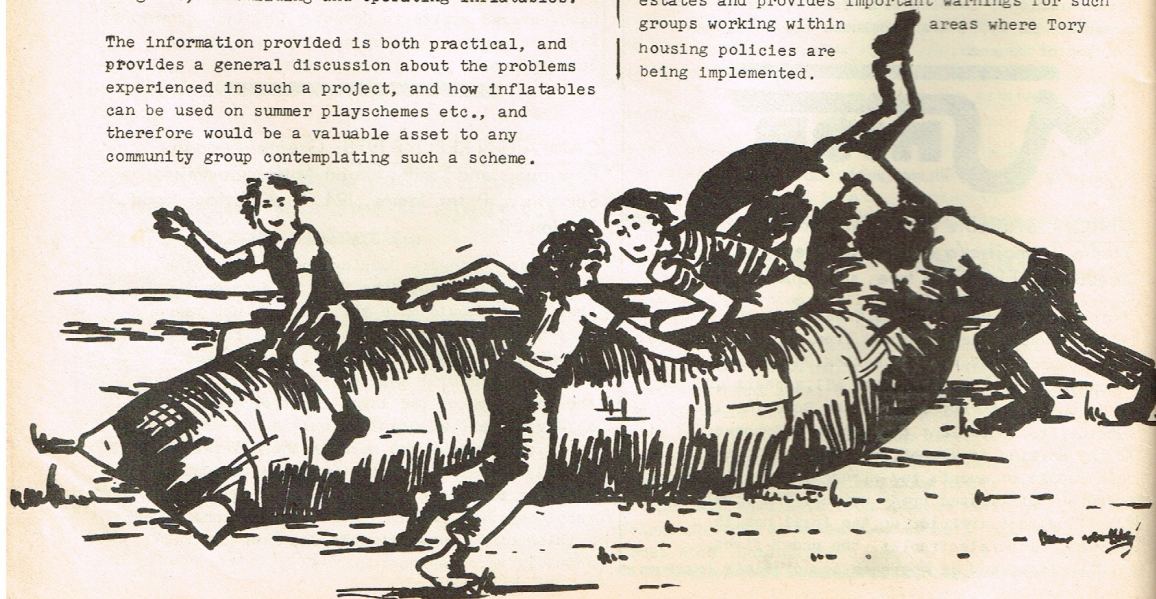
From Wandsworth Community Publications Group, 8 Ridgemount Rd. SW18

This report looks at the negotiations between the Tory controlled Wandsworth Council and some of the tenants in high rise/high density estates which have resulted in £4½ million being budgeted to be spent on environmental improvements and compensatory works by the end of March 1982.

The report looks at the history of high density and high rise building and, numerically, the size of the problem in Wandsworth.

Using as the basis of the argument the Policy Review Subcommittee's report, compiled jointly by the Labour Council prior to their defeat in April 1978, and the Wandsworth Tenants Association Group, the report highlights the anomalies between the implementation of these recommendations and the Tory policies for selling council houses, limiting transfers and cutting social services expenditure and finally argues that within this political context, money spent in fulfilling their strategy for action is "money down the drain".

The report also aims to provide ideas and arguments for other tenants groups in consultation with local councils for improved facilities on estates and provides important warnings for such groups working within areas where Tory housing policies are being implemented.



INFORMATION EXCHANGE

REPORTS · PAMPHLETS · BULLETINS · NEW COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS · PAPERBACKS

THE GREAT LEAP BACKWARDS, From Holloway Housing Aid Centre, 43 Hornsey Rise London N19

This report examines the way in which Islington housing committee are cutting back on their housing programme, in the areas of Re-Hab, Newbuild, essential repairs, modernisation etc., in attempt to keep the rates down, and as part of the general cuts policy.

It looks at these decisions in the context of the overall housing need in the area, and includes detailed numerical breakdowns of the housing programme, and highlights the reality of the situation with examples of specific cases from the current Holloway Housing Aid Centre's caseload.

GUIDE TO ESTATES ACTION PROGRAMME

From Holloway Housing Aid Centre, 43 Hornsey Rise, London N19.

A more specific report relating to the situation in the Estates Action Programme, and how it fits in to Islington's overall housing programme.

It highlights the problems experienced by the tenants on the estates during the E.A.P., both during essential repair programmes and once rehabilitation starts, and includes specific reports from different estates.

Both this, and the above report, while being invaluable to activist groups in Islington, might also be used as a general basis for analysis in other areas.

A TENANTS GUIDE TO REHABILITATION

From TWIN, 11 St. Colme St. Edinburgh

A guide to individual's and groups' rights during a process of council rehabilitation of an area, including positive suggestions as to how to ensure you get your rights and what to do when you don't.

Some information is specific to Edinburgh e.g. names of people to contact, but definitely a helpful guide outside of Edinburgh as well, and could conceivably be "localised" by specific area tenant associations etc.



FIVE DAYS IN IRELAND Published by Newcastle upon Tyne Trades Council, 199, Hugh Gdns, Benwell, Newcastle 4. £1 +post.

The report of 9 delegates from Newcastle, Gateshead and N.Tyneside Trades Councils who spent 5 days visiting Irish working people in their workplaces and communities. Newcastle T.C. has had long links with Derry T.U.C. believing that the tragic events in Ireland need to be discussed by working people here and in Ireland. It sees long term solutions to the basic political, economic and social problems in Ireland as only coming when working people get together.

The report includes a close look at the economy of Northern Ireland; the marked similarity of its decline with that of the N.E. of England (reliance on shipbuilding and heavy engineering, on multinationals and Government aid to private industry and public spending on social services). It describes community life - on the Creggan Estate in Derry and on the Falls Road in Belfast - and the various community groups and women's movement campaigns which are attempting to improve conditions for working people. Basic information on political history and political organisations. Very readable and good photos. They want you to read the report and open up discussion on Ireland in your organisation.



CREGGAN ESTATE IN DERRY

UNPAID WORKERS NEEDED

HILLINGDON LEGAL RESOURCE CENTRE NEED unpaid workers to help co-ordinate their fight for the re-establishment of free legal services in the Borough after the Council closed the Law Centre in April. Help with women's advice project, exhibition on Council housing and against sales, kids' rights and race discrimination advice service also needed. Contact them on 01-573-2778 any weekday.

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

REPORTS · PAMPHLETS · BULLETINS · NEW COMMUNITY NEWSPAPERS · PAPERBACKS

CRISIS IN ENGINEERING: MACHINE TOOL WORKERS FIGHT FOR JOBS Coventry Workshop/Institute for Workers' Control. From Coventry Workshop, 40, Binley Road, Coventry 1, Price £1.50 + post.

In the face of 23,000 jobs lost in the machine tools since 1970 ($\frac{1}{4}$ of the machine tool labour force) many official investigations have looked at the crisis in the industry - most of them from the employers' point of view. Their accounts are therefore put in terms of factors like slump in world trade, lack of incentives for employers to invest capital and lack of productivity and their solutions involve concentration on high technology machine tools (and elimination of even more jobs). In contrast, this report, commissioned by the Coventry Machine Tool Workers' Committee is concerned with defending machine tool workers' jobs and fighting for greater control over the future of the industry. Discusses the role of competition from imports, how employers have been dismantling the industry, the effects of automation on work in the industry, who has benefitted from state intervention and building a trade union strategy and a workers plan for the industry.



COMMUNITY ACTION BACK ISSUES

A Package of all available back copies which will include the Supplements to the Investigators Handbook + all Special Packages (with the exception of the out of print parts of the C.P.O. Action Reports for which photocopies can be ordered at 75p. extra) - Special price £3.50 inc. post. Order Form on back.

HELP TO SELL COMMUNITY ACTION

Please fill in the form below. We will send you some C/A posters and information sheets describing C/A aims together with a list of contents of back issues. Each issue of C/A will be sent on sale or return basis. We must however have payment and unsold copies returned on a regular basis.

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WITH TENANTS & TRADE UNIONISTS**

Services to Community Action and Tenants, the national housing and planning project, wants someone to help prepare material for, and organise courses and workshops on housing and planning issues for tenants associations, trade unionists and community organisations in Nottingham. Community action experience and/or knowledge of housing and planning

issues important and preferably some experience of organising material for teaching purposes. Applicants must be unemployed. Salary £73 per week. Initial contract for one year, possibility of continuing employment afterwards. Send a summary of your experience as soon as possible to: SCAT 31 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1 (01 253 3627)

CO-ORDINATOR

Birmingham Community Transport, a well-established community project based in north Birmingham is part of the national Community Transport organisation which is a registered charity. We aim to provide a cheap transport, furniture and minibus service for community groups, welfare agencies etc.

The co-ordinator will direct and co-ordinate the work of the project's volunteers. There is scope for development, but the first essential is to ensure the reliable and efficient running of the project.

Contact Mike Galloway, Community Transport, 54b Lozells Road, Birmingham B19 2TJ
021 523 6595 for further details.

**Wanted
community worker**

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5th worker for non-hierarchical team, interested in neighbourhood care, welfare rights and school work. Community or related work experience desirable. Commitment to collective working essential.
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For more details contact Lewisham Task Force, 74 Deptford High Street, London, SE8.
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- NO. 1 (C.A.19) HOW TO ORGANISE AND RUN A PUBLIC MEETING
- NO. 2 (C.A.20) ORGANISING A PETITION
- NO. 3 (C.A.21) CONSTITUTION FOR TENANTS AND ACTION GROUPS
- NO. 4 (C.A.22) WRITING A REPORT
- NO. 5 (C.A.24) LOBBYING
- NO. 6 (C.A.27) PROPOGANDA - PUSHING OUT YOUR OWN
- NO. 7 (C.A.28) MEMBERSHIP - HOW TO BUILD IT UP
- NO. 8 (C.A.30) SETTING UP AN ADVICE CENTRE
- NO. 9 (C.A.38) BEING A DELEGATE
- NO.10 (C.A.39) STARTING TO ORGANISE
- NO.11 (C.A.41) ORGANISING A DEMONSTRATION

These issues also include other articles directly relevant to organising, for example TENANTS FEDERATIONS - PROBLEMS AND POWER (C.A.20), TENANTS AND WORKERS TAKING JOINT ACTION (C.A.22), CLAIMANTS ORGANISE (C.A.24), and FIGHTING FOR UNDER FIVES (C.A.30).

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SPECIAL OFFER *The INVESTIGATORS HANDBOOK plus the 4 SUPPLEMENTS for only £1 inc. post.

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A year's subscription (6 issues) to Community Action costs £1.80 (or more if you can afford it), £1.80 abroad (surface mail), and £3.50 to libraries, local authorities, firms, etc. Please let us know if you belong to a community group/tenants' association.

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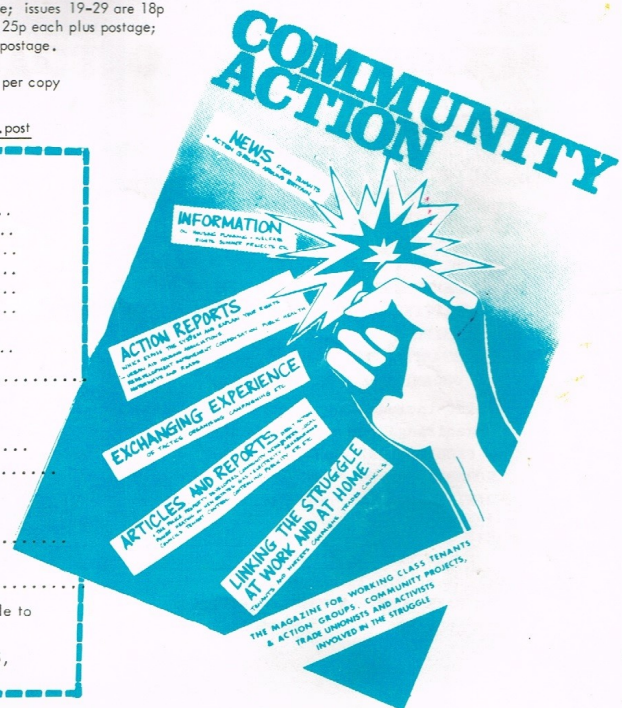
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WHAT IS COMMUNITY ACTION MAGAZINE?

Community Action is an entirely independent non-profit magazine, and all those involved work on a voluntary basis. The magazine is written for and by people involved with tenants and community groups and attempts to achieve the following aims:

1. To exchange information on tactics, organisation and general information between action groups.
2. To provide information on legal rights and procedures relating to the various activities in which action groups are involved.
3. To examine the political and economic issues with which action groups are concerned.
4. To exchange ideas on what community action is about and how it can be organised.
5. To investigate the roles of different organisations, authorities and individuals, both in issues affecting action groups and within community action.

The magazine exists to be used by people involved in tenants' and community groups, both by them writing notes, comments, reports about their activities for the magazine, and also by them copying and distributing any material which is printed in the magazine.
The magazine is produced every two months.